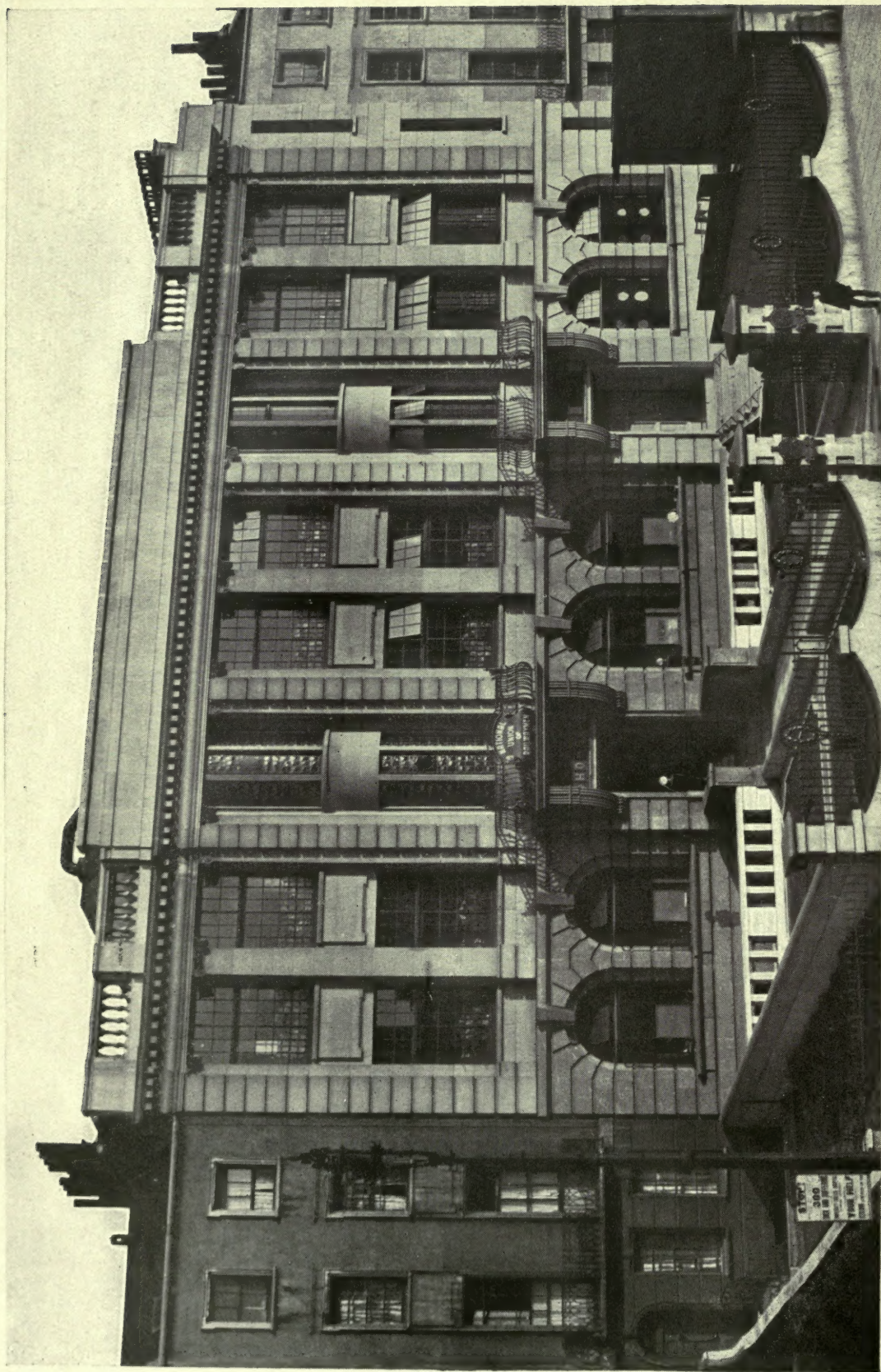


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FIFTY YEARS OF RAILWAY - TRADE - UNIONISM

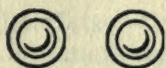
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FOREWORD.

BY THE RIGHT HON. J. H. THOMAS, M.P.

WHEN I requested Bro. Alcock to write the history of our organisation I had in mind that there was no member of the union who had played a longer or nobler part in the administration of its internal affairs, and who had such a storehouse of information of the early days. But obviously, many of the latter-day events crowded in so rapidly, the one upon the other, that it would be hardly possible for any one individual to keep abreast of the times.

I think that perhaps it would be appropriate here in this foreword to touch upon the inner history of some of the outstanding events of recent years, commencing, say, with the 1911 strike, although, of course, owing to the limits of space the account must necessarily be brief.

How well I remember going down to Liverpool in 1911 and finding things drifting from bad to worse. Groups of men were coming out on strike here and there without any clear conception of what was wanted or where it was going to end; members of one society were adopting one attitude and members of the other another. My old friend T. P. O'Connor, M.P., and I met the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, and urged him to intervene with the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company in order to bring about a meeting to discuss the situation. The L. & Y. gave a very definite refusal, the statement being attributed to the General Manager that he would rather see the railroads rust than consent to meet me. I realised at once that if the situation were left to the three separate Executives there would soon be complete chaos. I therefore conceived the idea of engaging the Engineers' Hall, which was capable of housing the Executives of the three unions. And having done this I proceeded to find Mr. T. Lowth, at that time General Secretary of the General Railway Workers' Union, telling him that I had summoned a meeting of my Executive, and urging him to call a meeting of his Executive at the same time and place, which he did. I made the same proposal to the late Mr. Fox, of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, with the result that on the following Friday morning the three Executive Committees were in session under one roof, and a joint meeting of three bodies was held.

the same day. I can still recall drafting the resolution which empowered the three bodies to act together, but, knowing the prejudice that would exist if I myself moved it, I got Mr. Fox to do so.

What followed will still be fresh in the minds of members. How, after every effort to bring about a settlement had failed, a strike was declared, and how we were urgently summoned from Liverpool to London to meet the President of the Board of Trade. On that memorable Saturday morning when the strike was on the present Prime Minister (Mr. Lloyd George) walked into the yard behind the Board of Trade offices and told me about the mobilisation of the troops, the serious danger of war with Germany, and the delicate situation that had arisen with France over the question of Morocco. He pleaded the urgent need for a settlement. This was in the early hours of the morning, and I promptly asked him whether he did not think that the railway companies had some responsibility in the matter, and why not, therefore, put the same plea to the railway managers. This seemed to appeal to his Celtic imagination, and within a few hours Sir Guy Granet met us at the Board of Trade, thus conceding for the first time official Trade Union recognition. We battled that day to effect a settlement until nearly midnight, so anxious had the situation become, and I can remember quite well a message arriving at the offices of the Board of Trade from King Edward at about 12-15 on the Sunday morning, asking that I myself should acquaint his Majesty of the terms.

The following weeks were times of great difficulty. So many local officials had made all manner of extravagant promises to "blacklegs" under the assumption that the men would be beaten in the strike. Fixing up the details was a very anxious time. Two men stand out on the railway companies' side, in that memorable meeting at the Board of Trade, the late Sir Gilbert Claughton, who was then Chairman of the London and North-Western Railway Company, and of whom it could truly be said that his word was his bond, and Sir Guy Granet, General Manager of the Midland Railway, who probably found himself in a greater difficulty than anybody else. I well remember Sir Guy Granet saying that he could only ask us to trust him, and that we should not be disappointed. We did trust him, and we were not disappointed. Incidentally, Sir Guy presided over many subsequent negotiations, and I have never yet met a railwaymen's representative who would not pay a high tribute to his tact, courtesy, and ability.

At the time of the strike Mr. H. H. Asquith was the Prime Minister. He was brought into the business just prior to the fateful strike decision, and at a meeting of the three joint Executive Committees

gave utterance to the statement that the food supplies of the people would be maintained at all cost, and that the whole of the resources of the State would be used if necessary for that purpose, and of that he wished to warn us in advance. That was the last time he took part in the negotiations, which were then taken in hand by Mr. Lloyd George. Whilst no doubt this would have been the duty of any Government, the manner and place in which the statement was made had the effect of conveying the impression to the members of the Executives that the Government was prepared to take sides with the railway companies against the men. It was within half-an-hour of the utterance of those words that the telegrams were despatched calling the strike.

Apart from the work of the Royal Commission, one result of the 1911 strike was that two of the three unions which joined us in the fight, namely, the United Signalmen's and Pointsmen's Society and the General Railway Workers' Union, recognised the futility of sectional organisation. There was a fusion of the three unions into the N.U.R., which brought the end of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, so dear to many old members.

Throughout it all poor old Jim Williams showed himself a noble soul. The state of his health and his physical disabilities made it difficult for him to bear the strain and to get about. Although my position was that of Assistant General Secretary and subordinate to him, there never was the slightest tinge of jealousy nor resentment at the part I played or the credit that was given. A complaint of victimisation was lodged against the Midland Railway Company, with the result that an inquiry was held under the chairmanship of the present Judge Aitken. At the request of Williams I took the case. Mr. W. Clower, the Assistant General Manager, conducted the case for the company. How well I can recall the winding up of the hearing. I had been speaking for some hours, and, suddenly turning round in the midst of my peroration, I saw my dear friend Jim Williams in tears. On sitting down he grasped me by the hand. Here again, no jealousy, no suspicion, simply bubbling over with joy at my success. His fine character will ever live in the memory of those who were privileged to know him.

I must try to touch more lightly on some of the other outstanding events.

In 1914 notice was given to terminate the Conciliation Scheme. We had worked hard for several months on a new scheme, which was unexpectedly rejected by a delegate meeting. The situation thus suddenly became strained, and the outlook was so black that everybody expected a great industrial upheaval towards the close of the year,

when the war suddenly broke out. In view of the great national peril a proposal for an Industrial Truce was made. We said to the railway companies that, whatever our grievances or difficulties may be, they were nothing comparable with the dangers facing the nation at that moment. Consequently we entered into the now famous Industrial Truce, and I was subjected to considerable abuse for my share in it. Looking back I not only have no regrets, but in similar circumstances would do the same again.

Contrary to expectations, the cost of living rose rapidly, and the very poor wages existing in the railway service very soon placed railwaymen in a serious position. It was then that negotiations were opened for the War Bonus. During the war I do not remember any settlement having been made except after heated controversy at the delegate meeting; in fact, on more than one occasion it looked as though it was impossible to avoid a strike. The whole atmosphere had entirely changed. It is indeed true that the appetite grows on what it is fed. Although our first National Programme merely demanded a two shillings a week advance, which at that time would have been considered a great triumph, on the several occasions during the war when we secured an increase of five shillings the wild men were always prominent with the cry that I had sold the pass.

Whilst on this point I might mention that a feeling had grown that it was myself alone who determined the issue, whereas in fact the Executive Committee or the Delegate Meeting was invariably the responsible body. It is true that we adopted a practice, which happily still exists, and which I have no hesitation in saying could be adopted with advantage by other unions: we had but one spokesman to present the case in all our negotiations with the railway companies or with the Government. Thus I always found myself in a very strong position, as there was never the danger of my arguments being inadvertently upset by another. The great advantage of this procedure was particularly manifest when we met the Government. More than once it was amusing to watch the Prime Minister baiting my colleagues in the hope of finding some division. But it never came off. This, of course, does not mean that we were always agreed, but that we arranged to fight out our differences either before or after meeting the other side.

Looking back at this period, I remember on more than one occasion, after we had signed a settlement and congratulations were being showered upon us, turning to Cramp and saying that what these people really ought to do was sympathise with us, as they did not know the trouble that was in store when the time came for the bonus to be taken off. I was never deceived as to the difficulties that would

follow settlements made under such abnormal conditions, but it is not easy to get others to appreciate a situation of this kind.

If any evidence were required as to the wisdom of entering into the truce, it is in the victory scored in the agreement for the eight-hours day, which has long been the ideal of the British working-class movement. We struggled for many years for the principle of the eight-hours day, and now we have won it for many grades of workers in the railway service. We got the principle conceded in 1918 by the then President of the Board of Trade, Sir Albert Stanley, now Lord Ashfield, who, incidentally, was himself a practical railwayman. He won the respect of every member of my Executive Committee by his straightforward, honourable dealing. At first, however, he was adamant on the exclusion of the Irish railwaymen. Readers will recall that one of the first acts of the new (and present) Prime Minister was the taking over of the Irish railways. John Redmond and I had repeatedly tried and failed to induce the Government to do so earlier, as Lord Kitchener, whilst at the War Office, was always the barrier by his refusal to consent to the control of the Irish railways as an essential military requirement. However, in the negotiations, I made a special plea for our Irish members, and I am glad to say that ultimately I succeeded. The original eight-hours day agreement was drafted to apply only to Great Britain, but as a result of our negotiations Lord Ashfield himself added in ink the words "and Ireland," so that it then applied to "Great Britain and Ireland." Except perhaps for the little hitch over the attempted exclusion of Ireland, I frankly admit that the eight-hours day settlement was one of the easiest tasks it has ever fallen to my lot to undertake. The eight-hours day has been a great boon, and is very highly appreciated by the railwaymen.

I ought perhaps to touch upon the incident leading up to my resignation in September, 1918, which I can truthfully say was one of the saddest days of my life. I have never been anything but a railwayman or a railwaymen's representative. I watched the society grow into one of the most powerful Trade Union organisations in the world; I saw the happier homes of railwaymen and their families, which I attributed to the strength of the organisation. But I always laid down one clear policy. That was just as we expected the railway companies to keep to a bargain so the men themselves should display as high a standard of honour and stand by their agreements. In defiance of a national settlement some of our South Wales members struck work. I felt that not only was this a great blow at my leadership but that it would seriously damage the prestige of the union, especially as the incident happened at the most critical period of the

War. Many who read this book will remember my battle with the recalcitrant members in Wales, followed by my resignation. I was at the time fully determined to go through with it, but the hundreds of resolutions from every part of the country and the thousands of personal letters from individual railwaymen and their wives, and the refusal of the Executive to accept the letter of resignation, left me with no alternative than to continue in office, and which I do not regret.

Some little time before this incident I received an invitation to join the Cabinet. I carefully weighed the whole situation. I wanted to do the best for our movement, and particularly for railwaymen who placed me in the position I held, as well as for the country. Reluctantly I came to the conclusion that, high as was the honour, remunerative as was the post, and great as was the prestige of a Cabinet Minister, my duty in those troublesome days was to stick to the old ship, knowing that the members would appreciate my action in doing so. Imagine then the blow when our members in South Wales kicked over the traces and which led to my letter of resignation.

Perhaps one of the most difficult and anxious times in my career was the 1919 railway strike. It is no secret that I dreaded the possibility of a strike and strove day and night to avoid it. The brothers Geddes were then in the Cabinet, Sir Auckland as President of the Board of Trade, and Sir Eric as Minister of Transport. Our negotiations with the Government had been conducted through Sir Auckland Geddes, who was, however, always assisted by a Committee of General Managers, who, of course, always saw to it that he never went wrong on any point of detail.

The terms proposed for standardisation of wages and conditions failed to give satisfaction, and were rejected. This was then followed by the now famous letter from Sir Auckland Geddes intimating that the terms offered were "definitive," a word never previously used in railway negotiations, and which, I hope, will never be used again. All our efforts to secure a settlement were in vain and the strike was declared. The Government having been responsible for the negotiations the dispute put on the appearance of a war between railwaymen and the State.

A few things will always live in my memory. Firstly, there was the magnificent response of the men to the strike call, although there had been no ballot and no elaborate preparations. The great army of railwaymen stopped work as one man, and credit must be given to the members of the A.S.L.E. & F. who so gallantly stood in with us. This was perhaps the greatest industrial conflict the country had ever known,

and although troops were mobilised everything passed off peacefully, no unpleasant incidents, no sabotage, no damage. In fact, from a record that was made it appears that there were over a hundred football matches played between the soldiers and the strikers for the benefit of the railwaymen's funds. I claim that this anxiety not to promote disorder is only another demonstration of the practical commonsense of the British working man.

Throughout this dispute all manner of pressure was brought to bear upon me with the object of extending the scope of the strike. Offers of assistance came in from all quarters. I set myself resolutely both against any proposed extension of the strike and any attempt to shift the issue from the question of a wages dispute to something else. There were people quite prepared to use a railway upheaval, as they termed it, for the purpose of ending the existing social order. I felt that to allow anyone else to step in and control the strike would have been as disastrous to the railwaymen as it would to the country. The settlement was reached on the Sunday, and whilst the railwaymen throughout Great Britain had no opportunity of learning the terms, their loyalty to the organisation and its officers was such that they immediately obeyed the instructions to return to work. That is the best answer to those who are always shouting that the leaders were not trusted by the rank and file.

Another feature during this anxious time was the pressure from those outside the dispute for the intervention of people in high places. I steadfastly refused such counsel, although it was, of course, well intentioned, but in a dispute of this kind it is always better if settled by the parties concerned, who, of course, understand their difficulties better than anyone else.

This book is a record of the growth of railway Trade Unionism. It is more, it shows how the railwaymen have gradually emerged from virtual slavery to a measure of industrial freedom and independence previously unknown. But there is, of course, much more to be done. Sectionalism must go. Railway shopmen have pinned their faith to the power and influence of our organisation, and they must not be disappointed. We have already established machinery covering the great majority of railway employees, but no matter how elaborate may be the machinery, unless it is worked in the right spirit it will fail. Railwaymen can best defend and maintain their position, whilst demanding the best possible standard of life for wife and family, by being prepared in return to give their best possible service. That is the spirit I wish to encourage, and whilst no one can give any guarantee

against strikes we shall by these methods reduce them to a minimum. The railway managers, I am pleased to say, have also adopted a new attitude, and I have no hesitation in paying tribute to their broad-mindedness and tolerance. I believe they themselves are anxious to secure a better understanding, and, of course, its achievement rests as much in their hands as in ours. May those whose task it will be to continue the history of our great union be able to record the continued progress and success with the same pleasure and satisfaction as this volume is presented.

PREFACE.

WHEN Mr. J. H. Thomas asked me to undertake the task of "putting a little of our history into print," I pleaded inability, as, having started work at the age of 7, followed by active participation in religious and in municipal life, as well as in the Trade Union, co-operative, and educational spheres, I had no leisure to acquire the cultured ability to make it worthy of our organisation. Starting at 16 years of age as a lay preacher in the Primitive Methodist Connexion, I have laboured ever since in that same calling, but not in the same body. Trade Unionism has ever been a passion. I still remember the depression that weighed on me as a lad of 12 when, delivering the "Agricultural Labourers' Gazette," the circulation dropped week by week till it went to zero. My father was one of the last two members of the village branch of Arch's union. Mr. Thomas, with pointed bluntness, waved these pleas aside, saying, "If you look at it in that spirit you will never do it. Now get on with it!" And "Jim," as my readers know, has a persuasive way with him.

My thanks are especially due to John Burns for the loan of the "Beehive," a working-class journal—which is a splendid piece of history of working-class opinion and effort—of which even the British Museum has only a fragment. He also lent me Mavor's "History of the Scotch Strike," which, however, added nothing to my knowledge, and not a sentence is quoted. It was within John's province to supply me with much more had I been able to use it. The Sunday morning I visited him I saw for the first time his great and wonderful library. No man who has taken part in the Labour Movement has the historic sense to the same degree as John. It seemed to me an infinite pity that he should be outside the Parliamentary sphere, as the service he could render to Labour is incalculable. I do not blame him or anyone, but I am afraid that in the Labour Movement we want a little more catholicity of spirit.

My thanks are also due to Alderman Pocock, who never yet failed a friend or a cause; to Fred Fagg, Sam Lazenby, and, more than all, to my old friend and secretary, J. T. Scarff, and to Willet Ball, the Editor of the "Railway Review." These acknowledgments also extend to my chief, Mr. C. Carter, of the catering department of the C.W.S., who, in addition to his marked kindness to me during my 25½ years at Leman Street, granted me the time, whenever I wanted it, without which this history could not have been written.

When I wrote the 134 pages of the Souvenir of 1910 I lamented that the records to Mr. Richard Bell's time had vanished. Since compiling that history it is a remarkable fact that, without a single request, bit by bit the whole of our records has come into my hands, and not a little of its secret history. I place it on record that I am strongly of opinion that some of these were stolen from 306, City Road, or 55, Colebrooke Row. Be that as it may, they will be handed over to the organisation, with one condition: that they are placed in the strong room in which the Trustees of the society keep their parchments.

I have dealt lightly with the last two years of our history, as events so recent are fresh in the memory.

Fraternally yours,

GEORGE W. ALCOCK.

Chapter I.

PREADVENTUAL DAYS.

HISTORY shows that encroachments upon human liberties have generally met with resistance. Oppression is followed by a check—nature, circumstances, or men providing the counteracting forces. For a time it may be borne silently; opposition, if it comes, may be feeble and soon overwhelmed, but sooner or later it finds expression, loud, insistent, and irresistible; thought and action unite seeking provision for remedies, issues are joined, and the battle wages.

To state in prose terms the poet's dictum: the partition between good and ill, between tyranny and freedom, between achievement and failure, between what is and what might be, where possible good resides, where ill is, is often so slender, that the lack of a word or action, or the use of both, are factors which may sway history and settle the destinies of movements, national or local.

The ebb or flow of facts, of circumstances, pessimism or optimism are all factors that determine the life or death of movements which have altruistic aims.

It is, however, sun-lit in clearness that, wherever or from whatever cause failure comes, if the aims are beneficent, or have in their folds elements of good, their triumph is only a question of time. Neglect to seize opportunities may mean delay, faulty action may hinder quick realisation, but time corrects mistakes, redeems ill-made ventures, makes new forms or settings, and men with greater skill or courage carry to completion what others began.

Nothing fails—hindrances bend, are broken or removed. Progress is a steady, persistent force, moving sometimes along zigzag paths, uphill or down, as courage or reaction may decide, in the difficult or easy line of travail. Times and circumstances carry the reformer to his goal, the backward glance showing the gains, the long, broad view making this easily perceptible.

In the history to which I am about to give form and psychology this is everywhere apparent. Frail men and strong men come and go; with the hour in every case comes the man; opposing forces are beaten down and triumph after triumph is reaped. Quite clearly we see the stages of the struggle, progress sometimes being measured by inches. We take longer strides and reaction follows, when another advancing wave comes on, and in the new and turbulent circumstances we are hurled forward to final attainment. Nowhere is this seen more plainly

than in "recognition," which, after long years of hard work and patient waiting, fell into our hands like ripe fruit.

So also in other ventures vast expenditure of brain-effort, time, money, or deepseated thought appeared to produce nothing, and then, as if in a moment we come with rejoicing, bringing our sheaves with us. Behind all success, however, is the work of the pioneer, whose every step was beset by danger, and to whom success came only by untiring effort. "Lucky chance," says the thoughtless and inactive observer, whereas perhaps unnoticed lay the fact that by strenuous labour only was success made possible.

There is no phase of our history where this is not written large. At one time in the history of our attempted railway organisation a man hardly knew his brother, distrust was everywhere rife, in spite of the fact that no effective progress could be made without trust, both in fellow workers and in leaders. Effective action followed only upon the heels of perfect trust.

The first active efforts towards organisation on railways commenced about 1865, and the history of that time shows the ferment of reform. It was a time to take occasion by the hand, which was done, and it is quite easy to see the causes of failure, where failure resulted. There were no less than four distinct sectional movements at that time working with the one aim. There were also local efforts with sectional aims. But all failed, although they succeeded in showing what had yet to be. Sectionalism is a lonely and selfish furrow to plough. It has never succeeded, and never will succeed, except as it comes by added strength through an all-inclusive body.

The fear of danger from an "all-in policy" on the part of the companies gave advantages, sometimes by unclean methods, but the frontal fact of any garnered sheaf is not its strength, but that which was apart from them, labelled "all grades," now renamed "industry." All of these had the "friendly" element, a necessity of the age, this being the only method of keeping men together, because an effective fighting spirit had not come to the birth. Guards, signalmen, switchmen, enginemen, and others were concerned only with their own little garden patch, which they looked upon as the universe, but in each of these was a remnant having the larger vision, the longer view, the higher aim, in which self took a secondary place. These won in the end.

Sectional failure furnished them with lessons which were unsparingly used. They taught that freedom from oppression needed compact strength; that liberty from tyranny could only come by oneness. "Yes, yes," said the objectors, "but enginemen, signalmen, guards, and platelayers could best understand what lay about them"; and so in their lonely paths they struck blindly and went angrily on, till they saw the futility of mere anger and futile buffeting. Misfortunes placed the feet of all in a larger room. Still it was to them what the alphabet is to the child; the heavy swinging gate to the realms

of literature. In concern for their own little section they came into the open; took to themselves a voice and spoke. But they were soon to learn the penalties of speech and action. The companies' scythes took a heavy swath as a tax upon freedom, and the red underscores against its heralds grew in number, and soon the railways knew them no more. Marked for destruction they fell. The methods which followed were subterranean. One cannot work underground so healthily and well as in a room into which the sunlight and fresh air come streaming through the window. Stern necessity made them burrow, and they did good work by stealth, acted secretly, and met repression by craft. They stooped and conquered partially. If a name was coupled with a speech, and the speech destroyed the man, they afterwards, except when some mischance ruled, kept back the name, and it was not till three and a-half decades after the event that names and speeches were flung out fearlessly upon the world, and even then sometimes not without penalty. Events decided action. This was not a railway phase alone; it was general history. It was not cowardice, but prudence.

When the high-souled Mazzini was striving for freedom from the Austrian yoke he had to work underground, otherwise action was impossible. He was one of the bravest of men. So far from avoiding danger, he was never out of it. With a price set upon his head in three countries, hunted by seven Governments, and assassins lying in ambush, his forty years of life passed in more peril than any other public man of his time. Italian liberty was won. And our men won, though in the winning many a victim lay along the pathway we have travelled. But they had made the road safe for after travellers.

In a later page will be mentioned daring speeches with names made public, which was not intended by the speakers. This was Press indiscretion. In the very first record that I have been able to find of a public meeting (sectional at that) to further railway organisation one man was struck down. These sectional speakers, every one of them, were among the founders of the A.S.R.S. Sectional efforts seemed to them the only possible method. They had to walk warily, because good men were scarce. To be dismissed was to impart terror to others. It was part of the price for freedom to take unavoidable danger. Those in authority thought they had the right to determine what should be and who should be, and those who came between them and their conceptions were removed mercilessly, with meagre excuses.

By an inexorable law sectionalism soon fell away completely, and amalgamation was almost perfect for six years, when sectionalism again lifted its head and still continues. Deep-seated trouble will ultimately be the cause of its death. Misfortunes make reform. The noticeable feature of the correct guiding hand in the turning points of our history is also marked by its evolutionary spirit. In a later chapter I shall show the emerging features, from outside aid to self-help. As in all forms of life, progression has been uneven. In the same

way we are not free from blunders. Errors of thought and action are always evident, and this record would not be history if this were not so, but it stands out, as mountains stand out in a landscape, that when we most seemed to fail we were nearer success than at any time, without actually having the spoil in our hands. This is the verdict of history.

It is only when we look backward that we see how narrow is the margin between failure and success. Very often failure itself hastens success. Despair is not written in the vocabulary of reformers. Every reform movement is fissiparous. Other men in new ways take up the unachieved. Ideas dropped in one form appear in another and find expression; the vanquished win. Nerveless hands may let fall the banner, but stronger hands will grip firmer the falling standard and carry on. Men die, but men are born. Things pass, things come, and "the weariest river runs somewhere safe to sea." No man is indispensable in the cause of reform. Both reform movements and nations are greater than the individual.

Our evolution is only history writ large. The evolutionary process of reform goes on and "widens with the process of the suns." The facts stand out visibly to the student of history, and are at its very fount. Right away from the manorial system, to go back no farther, there has been a steady progression. Privileges and charters to towns, in products and markets, had direct bearings upon labour. Dissensions amongst nobles created a need for realisable forms of wealth. Privileges were bartered; villenage looked out towards freedom. The necessities of the rich were the opportunities of the poor, and a wage class emerged.

The Wat Tyler insurrection had as a primary cause the attempt to take from men what they had won. In other cases the attempts to hurl Labour back to its former condition by means of legislative restrictions were overridden by economic facts, as well as in the joy of a new-found freedom. In Norfolk a larger freedom for Labour had as its base the resistance to common enclosures. Virile and insurgent Labour broke through restrictive legislation, which would have bound it to a locality. It went to towns from agricultural districts, and from town to town, just as it suited its inclination. Fines fell into desuetude, legislative enactments failed, force, as ever, was no remedy. Plagues, no less than self-assertion, helped it. Manhood was pitted against the divine right of kings, and Edward III., asserting his divine right, soon found the gods unwilling to aid him when he said no demand should be made, nor anyone pay higher rates than the law allowed. Parliament penalised and threatened still more, but Labour moved onward, and nothing could hinder.

Religion, no less than economic facts, took its part in assisting Labour. The Wyclif Preachers, whatever the views they held about men's souls, had a true regard for their bodies, and the secularity of their teachings was the postulate of freedom, knowing that religious freedom could only companion with the economic. The celebrated

John Ball, preaching to willing ears and awakening minds, said: "Good people, there will never be well in England so long as there be villeins and gentlemen. By what right are they whom we call lords greater than we? On what grounds have they deserved it? Why do they hold us in serfage? They have leisure and fine houses, we have pain and labour, and the wind and the rain in the fields, and yet it is of us and our toil that these men hold their estate." William Morris, in that exquisite booklet, "The Dream of John Ball," has given us in delightful prose poetry the thoughts, language, and aspirations of those times, and in chapters three and four a dramatic presentation is given which expresses the yearning material and spiritual hunger of that time. The writer took the novelist's and poet's interpretation of history, and with consummate skill mirrors those times. Among the many utterances that throb with life Morris puts this into the mouth of John: "Forsooth, brothers, fellowship is heaven, the lack of fellowship is hell; fellowship is life, the lack of fellowship is death, and the deeds that ye do upon the earth, it is for fellowship's sake that ye do them, and the life that is in it, that shall live on for ever and ever, and each one of you part of it, while many a man's life upon the earth from the earth shall wane." The closing words of the chapter are: "And man help man and the saints in heaven shall be glad, because men shall no more fear each other; and the churl shall be ashamed, and shall hide his churlishness till it be gone, and he be no more a churl; and fellowship shall be established in heaven and on the earth."

It was the ringing in of a new note that shaped thought and history, and action following helped to mould it. Submission there was in the childhood of man; self-assertion and freedom belonged to the advancing age. Shackled thought and action fell away, progress took hold of progress, gain upon gain, and there was no lengthened pause. In the quaint thought and ancient spelling of Piers the Plowman, in the detailed abuses and adumbrated reforms, we see the world moving onward. "The moving finger writes, and having writ, moves on." The Lollards again are submerged in the vexatious Statutes of Labourers, but time rent the parchment on which it was printed. Kings, whose assumption of power is absolute, should be truthful, which cannot be said of Richard II. A lie is only a temporary refuge in times of trouble, and Nemesis awaits the liar. After making a pledge he recanted, and said: "In bondage shall you abide, and not your old bondage, but a worse." Fate, however, decreed that, in spite of imprisonments and exactions, the heralds of Labour's rights, though some fell wounded and slain, that engendered ideas held sway in spite of petitions and Acts of Parliament. Following him, the man of many wives, who did not always die peacefully in bed, might through prodigality commit many misdeeds; dissolve monasteries, debase coin, increase pauperism, confiscate guild treasuries, add evil to evil; yet evil has a limit, while reform has none.

Successive stages of oppression came, and Ket, a man of wealth, took up arms against them, but even his execution at Norwich could not stay the onward march of reform.

“For freedom’s battle once begun,
Bequeathed by bleeding sire to son
Though baffled oft, is ever won.”

Remarshalled hosts under another leader appeared. Ghost-like figures flit across history’s page, utter their message and disappear, leaving their influence behind them. Poor Laws emerge; there is a submerged class. Even then there is a higher standard of comfort for the many. Assessments of justices, say, rather, agents of law, were in themselves forms of repression, which men shook off, showing fronted hopes. Statutes of Frauds crushed out the small freeholder, but the few held on and were the protagonists of reform. So the zigzag path of history was being shaped. Prices rose, agriculture developed, rents increased, and manufacturers began to flourish. The wealthy manufacturer struts upon the stage, the industrial revolution follows, and with it one of the worst periods, if not the worst, in our rough island story.

With the hour the man came. Robert Owen was the one solitary voice denouncing this welter of gain at the expense of life. He was original, daring, not always wise, and was never more than a benevolent despot at the best. His favourite doctrine of character, through environment, might not be the mint of nature, but it held a part truth. For him to believe, to have an idea, was to practise. Having a resolute will he met difficulties with fervour and courage, suggested and practised remedies. He had the vision of a seer, the zeal of a born propagandist, even if he rode his hobbies to the death. He preferred to die among the ruins of his own falling walls than not to build at all. His theories proved expensive, but he put them to practical tests. He found the winning of adherents no easy task, but by education and improvements in Labour ideas, he gave a charter to children and checked the rapacity of merchants. He might offend religious people by his rationalism, his partners by his methods, his fellow manufacturers by his ideas and practices; he made mistakes, was narrow, fanatical, and peevish, but the blood of reform beat in his veins. He spent time, money, and strength in any cause he thought meritorious, and his sanguine temperament overcame obstacles, surmounted difficulties. Men failed him, many of his schemes were completely wrecked, and his falling away to spiritualism in the dotage of his life may be explained by the fact that he wanted to communicate with those whom the grave had claimed. Three great things stand to his credit. He was the first educational reformer of any note, was the father of the modern Factory Acts, and he set in motion the Co-operative Movement.

From the period of the industrial revolution what volumes of history have been written, and how many more might have been

written. Chartism came, and succeeded, though as a name it failed. Free Trade, Education Acts, repeal of Taxes on Knowledge, freedom values in life, knowledge and well-being. For these things men laboured, and we have entered into their labours. Some men worked openly, others quietly, but persistently, but they did their work well, bringing a rarified atmosphere and a higher standard of comfort and knowledge.

A very definite break with the past came with the repeal of the Combination Laws, which had been exacting and oppressive. Hume was credited with their passing, until Graham Wallas gave to the world the biography of Francis Place, who was one of the most remarkable figures in the political and industrial world. Then was seen the master hand and mind behind all in the unrivalled skill and organising power of this Tailor of Charing Cross. He had an uncanny insight into the character, motives, and abilities of men, knew to a nicety to whom he could entrust certain work, knew the men who would break as reeds in his hand, and because he was a strategist of a high order sometimes employed them, knowing they would fail, and wanting them to fail. He had the art of toying with men to keep them out of mischief. He would plump responsibility upon another in a manner which implied that he was the most fitting in the world to do what needed doing. He would take short cuts to avoid failures, and longer routes to ensure success; he was daring to the point of audacity, and yet his was the unseen hand that directed. No man had a greater power of self-effacement. When he wanted to defeat Wellington, the worst Prime Minister that Britain ever had, he secured the aid of a printer and others and placarded London with this: "To stop the Duke, go for gold," intending by this means to create a run upon the Bank of England. This is what happened, and Wellington's second administration, which lasted only nine days, was brought down. The iniquitous Combination Laws, in their working out, allowed the employers the power to cause a lock-out, but denied Labour the luxury of a strike, nor could it take refuge, as it tried to, under the ægis of a friendly society. The fact of combination had this effect, that the name given to it availed nothing. Not that it absolutely hindered organisation; this went on, notwithstanding these disadvantages. The best way to abolish a bad law, when circumstances admit of it, is to break it and bring odium upon those who resist repeal, as in the case of the tax upon knowledge. But the game was not so easy with the Combination Laws. The remarkable fact remains, however, that the agitation for the repeal of the Combination Laws did not originate with workmen, but with philosophic Radicals who were employers and politicians, but when the movement was well on its way workmen awoke as from a long sleep to assist those who were already working, and rid themselves of this heavy weight of law. Even then combination was liable to punishment. It was not called combination, but conspiracy, and for this rigged offence six Dorchester labourers

were sent to Botany Bay, the alleged offence being that of administering an unlawful oath. Agitation arose because of the conviction, and a "pardon" obtained, of which the men were not even informed, and only became aware by accident, one of them seeing it announced in an old newspaper he found in the Governor's house.

From that time the cause of Trade Unionism sped, not without difficulties, not without threats of action, and even prosecutions for conspiracy. Strikes and lock-outs occurred, prosecutions for molestation, and breaches of contract, till the builders' strike and lock-out of 1859, when conviction and imprisonment for picketing followed. From that time agitation never slumbered till a change was made in the law. During 1865-6 a Select Committee of the House of Commons inquired into the law of contract between master and servant, when it was shown that in England and Scotland as many as 11,000 cases of prosecution occurred annually. The next year a new Act was passed, and the Acts of the various Georges, whom Walter Savage Landor lampooned, were eventually rendered innocuous. So workmen took up the last line of his skit: "God be thanked, the Georges ended," as it applied to Acts of Parliament passed under their names.

Chapter II.

FROM 1850 TO 1871.

THE modern developments of associative life had fairly begun in 1850. The Rochdale Co-operative Movement started in 1844, as an aid to the then distress, soon to find itself hampered at every turn by insufficient legal elbow room. Each unit had to be self-contained, so that federation with any other organisation was an impossibility. With the passing of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, brought in by Slaney, the Member for Shrewsbury, the co-operators had the beginning of a charter. The circumstances which led to its passing were always regarded by J. M. Ludlow, one of the leaders of the Christian Socialist Movement, and for some time also Registrar of the Friendly Societies, as providential, so natural did circumstances combine to favour it, and so skilfully was the Bill drawn that not once did the word "co-operative" appear in it. It passed quietly through both Houses almost without question. Amending and Consolidating Acts have since been passed, not all that was wanted, but enough to be going on with. So with increased powers, with the protective quality, allowing one society to become a member of another, a wholesale society was a possibility, and federation began.

Always careful to the point of timidity, co-operators canvassed every projected phase as they went along, and the English Wholesale was born 1863. The federation being formed, a Co-operative Congress was a necessity. The Christian Socialists, who started productive workshops during the 'fifties, had held some congresses connected with their distinctive phase. In 1869 began the series of Co-operative Congresses, which have been continued annually, only meeting with difficulties during the war period.

Various trade disputes, more especially in London between 1850 and 1860 made it urgent that some such federal system should be formed for Trade Union purposes. The disputes of 1859-60 led in 1860 to the formation of the London Trades Council, previous to which there had been only some loose and intermittent gatherings of trades. Then Trades Council after Council was quickly formed, one such being formed in most of the large towns. The interest value of these showed a further need of linking up town with town, so that almost concurrently with the Trades Union Congress—called together by the Manchester Trades Council—the Co-operative Congress commenced. The Trades Union Congress was held in Manchester in 1868 and that of the Co-operative Societies in 1869, presided over by Tom

Hughes. The first Trades Union Congress presented no statistics; the second, at Birmingham, had a membership of 40 societies, with 48 delegates representing 250,000 members. The 1870 one, which should have been held in London, was not held till 1871, and then had a Trade Union membership of 289,430, which showed that Trade Union membership was on the increase. It is worthy of note that the membership of the whole Trade Union world was then less by 168,406 than the membership of the National Union of Railwaymen in 1920. But 1872-3 was a period of good trade, bringing with it a revival of Trade Unionism, which in 1873 had risen to 1,191,922, and this was its first crest wave. Then by rapid falls and slight increases in a year or two—in 1888—it had sunk to 473,424, being even then below the membership of our union for 1919. The four years ending 1873 reflect our own history, during which period Trade Unions came into being in callings which had never before been organised.

In the 1871 wave the A.S.R.S. was born. Both the Co-operative Movement and the Trade Unions had their difficulties, but the Co-operative Movement has had a steady advance, whereas the Trade Union has had its ebbs and flows. But this fact is noticeable: that in those years in which the Trade Union Movement took a leap forward, the Co-operative Movement almost doubled itself. Again, the only year in which the Co-operative Movement receded almost coincided with the nadir point of the Trade Union movement. In 1879 the co-operative sales had sunk over one million in trade, which had previously increased nearly five millions, while the Trade Union movement in 1881 sank to its lowest point, viz., 460,797.

We must now go back a few years to see the gathering ideas and actions that preceded the birth of the A.S.R.S. No organisation is ever born of a single idea. Societies rise and fall in the years which mark the beginning of our history. The few years previous to that in which we started is covered with wreckages. We see the bravery of a few silhouetted against the timidity of the many. The brains and strength of the few had no fair field in which to work. Knowledge had to succumb to ignorance, and those brave old pioneers had to bow down before cowardice. The few who swung their arms, flung them into the air. When the few, nothing fearing, nothing doubting, went on with their work amid discouragements, adverse fates struck down the champions of their cause, terrorising the tame followers. For a time it seemed as if it was the end of all things. Courage was very gradual and of slow growth, but slow as it seemed to these ardent workers, it did grow. The daring of the few caught on, making, by sheer force, others dare. It was desperation or despair, and they plunged for desperation. Danger waited upon every worker, but the increase of workers meant greater safety for all. At times it must have seemed as if battling with almost infinite odds, but odds were taken, first by subterranean methods, which wrought graduating courage. The few inspired the many, and out of it, for a time, success came. For three months in 1865

a series of meetings was held up and down the country. One of these stands out boldly. Either by accident or design the names of the speakers appear, every one of them, and also the railway on which they worked. All these men appear as the most ardent workers when the A.S.R.S. came to be formed. The meeting was held at the Winchester Arms, Southwark, which was for nearly two years the meeting place of the London Executive of the A.S.R.S. For real vigour, audacity, plainness of speech and citation of facts nothing is wanting. It is the first published account of speeches that I have been able to trace. It may have been unsuspecting ignorance of the possible penalties which railway companies would be likely to inflict, ignorance of the presence of reporters, or failing to give them instructions not to publish names, but the names and speeches are recorded. Urwin, of the London and Brighton—in after records sometimes spelt Irwin, and on the first E.C. of the A.S.R.S.—was chairman, voicing the desire of the meeting, which was to establish a "United Benefit Society" to watch over the interests of the signalmen, pointsmen, and switchmen, to secure a reduction in the hours of labour, an increase in pay, and to provide superannuation. He enlarged on the necessity and benefits of combination, if they desired to ameliorate their conditions, which he gave as little better than slavery. Signalmen were working for as little as 2d. per hour, and he threw out to the audience the futility of appealing to boards of directors or shareholders unless they first put their own shoulders to the wheel, and showed a determination to help themselves. Brown, a signalman of 26 years' service, started at 24s. a week, with 36 trains, and when he was able to obtain another shilling he had 500 trains to look after. The signal boxes were denominated pigstyes. Such was the modesty of this pioneer that he did not complain of his own position; he was out to help others worse off than himself. He also advocated the formation of a signalmen and switchmen's society, and, calculating that there were about 50,000 of the grades they proposed to cater for, they ought to obtain a powerful society. Hemery—in other places named Emery—a L. C. D. signalman, with years' service to his credit, worked twelve hours a day and eighteen on a Sunday, for 26s. a week. Another speaker, named Weston, was on the West London Railway. He had been bold enough to ask for a wage as high as 26s. a week for his twelve hours a day and eighteen on Sunday, and had been told that if he was dissatisfied he could send in his resignation, which only his age precluded him from doing. The speech of the meeting, however, was by John Pilcher, one of the founders of the A.S.R.S. and for a quarter of a century a Trustee. He said he was a signalman at Stewarts Lane Junction on the L. C. & D. Railway. Owing to his mate being ill and the company unable to send relief, he had been on duty forty-eight consecutive hours, and had only five hours' rest before taking duty again. He contended that the way in which the men were treated was a disgrace to the companies. He hoped every

effort would be made to obtain the co-operation of men on all railways, and awaken all to the duty they owed to themselves and families. Pilcher always contended that he was the first victim for freedom of speech on railways. He was dismissed the L. C. & D., but the combine ban by the companies not to employ such men had evidently not come to fruition, as he obtained a berth as signalman on the West London Railway, only leaving that to take up the duty of Secretary to the Battersea Co-operative Society, of which he wrote its Jubilee History. He was an untiring advocate of Co-operation, was the first writer on Co-operation in the "Railway Review," and was instrumental in transferring our society's work to the Co-operative Printing Society. He was afterwards on the board of directors of that society.

A week later another meeting was held at Hawkstone Hall, Waterloo Road, South London, which was presided over by Tom Hughes, author of "Tom Brown's Schooldays." He had just been elected for Lambeth, owing to the prompt energy of George Jacob Holyoake. Hughes expressed surprise that they had no effective union to remedy the appalling conditions to which they were subject, and to which expression had been given at that meeting, and gave them wholesome advice to drop sectionalism or merge the sections into one effective union.

The guards also held meetings, as well as the enginemen, each advocating a society for their own grades. The first guards' meeting was presided over by Mr. Bicknell. At this meeting Mr. Grover advocated a union on the lines of the Engineers' Trade Union, with Out-of-Work Pay and means for legal defence, so as to have a solicitor at any court or inquiry in which the membership were concerned. All these meetings were reported in the Press of that time, one of them saying: "The guards have caught the prevailing epidemic, and are resolved to be 'up and at 'em.'" Sectional as these meetings were, they included speakers from other grades. At the signalmen's meeting J. Thompson, engine driver, was a speaker. He was prominent in the Enginemen's Society at that time, one of the bravest fellows that ever lived, and laboured indefatigably for his grade, and when the enginemen's strike, to be detailed later, failed, he had to leave the country, but came back again, was then employed on the Great Eastern, and his two sons are now in that company's employ.

Irwin was also a speaker at the guards' meetings, the president of our first meeting of signalmen, and at the guards' meeting reported an interview he had had with Tom Hughes, who had advised him to amalgamate all grades and unite together the existing and projected societies.

At both the Winchester Arms, Southwark, and Hawkstone Hall, Walworth, George Chapman, the first Secretary of the A.S.R.S., was announced as Secretary of the society, and at the second said it had been in existence three months, and they had decided to extend

it throughout the country. But before that the guards on the Brighton had formed the "Guards' United Benefit Society," with Trade Union functions. It was the amalgamation of these two that Hughes had urged. The working-class paper, the "Beehive," said at the commencement of its leader of November 18th, 1865, "There is a general idea of a general amalgamation among the different societies of railwaymen, which had lately come into existence. They could not do a wiser and better thing. It gave them other wholesome advice.

At this stage it is necessary to prick the first "Vincent" bubble. Charles Bassett Vincent, in later years, when the real facts could not be disputed, claimed to have been the real founder of the A.S.R.S. I shall have occasion more than once to set at nought his pretensions. On page 19 of his "Authentic History," which also differs very materially from his series of articles on "Railway Reformation," which ran in the "Railway Review," 1884-5, he says in bold Type: "*Here, then were the first elements of general unionism among all classes of railway servants.*" Unfortunately for his "Authentic History," on page 22, he gives dates. He says: "Before closing this chapter it may be worthy of record to give the exact date where the old society made its first practical start. It took place at the Guildhall Tavern, High Street, Worcester, on Sunday, November 19th, 1865, and Mr. Thomas Hughes, a goods guard in the service of the G. W. Railway, presided, and the following are the names of what may be termed the Pioneer Committee:—

Thomas Hughes, Goods Guard,	R. Clark, Goods Guard.
Chairman.	T. Grayhurst, Goods Guard.
J. Wardle, Foreman Goods Guard.	R. Wilkinson, Goods Guard.
B. Green, Foreman Goods Guard.	J. Pick, Pointsman.
W. Tyler, Foreman Goods Guard.	T. Shewell, Pointsman.
A. Biddle, Foreman Goods Guard.	M. D. Craven, Pointsman.
J. White, Foreman Goods Guard.	H. Rees, Shunter.
R. Cook, Yard Foreman.	J. Smith, Shunter.

(All in the service of the G. W. R. On the following Sunday (26th) a meeting was held at the Greyhound, Springfields, Wolverhampton, presided over by Mr. Thomas Tranter, goods guard, G. W. R., when about 60 persons were present." The signalmen's meeting at the Winchester Arms was held in October. The second signalmen's meeting was held at the beginning of November. The guards' meeting was right on the heels of this. The leading article of the "Beehive," in which was urged the amalgamation of all the sections, was on November 18th, or one day before that which Vincent alleges was the beginning of "general unionism among all classes of railway servants." Again, the Enginemen's Society was in existence, and J. Thompson was urging the others to combine with them, yet Vincent says, on page 26: "During the progress of the society another was started consisting

exclusively of enginemen and firemen." Vincent for the most part, draws upon his imagination for dates, and his personal vanity for his facts. Every date and fact show that these meetings were held before Vincent's. Bichnell—sometimes spelt Bicknell—was co-Secretary with Chapman for the guards, so that Chapman was secretary for the two societies, and Bichnell for the guards only. At the time of the Hawkstone meeting in early November, Bichnell gave reports of progress, which were matter of congratulation, and it was expressed in meeting assembled that "they had good servants in these two men."

The Press at this time did excellent service, and one newspaper had a column and a-half of a leading article "Danger in Signal Boxes," in which the long hours were specifically mentioned. Just at this period a shunter named Clark was killed on the L. & N. W. Railway, and his wife stated at the inquest that her husband had been on duty two nights and one day consecutively, and was working the last hour of the appointed time when he was killed. The jury were indignant, and wanted an inquiry into the hours worked. They refused to give a verdict till that inquiry had been made, notwithstanding the protest of the Coroner that the question of hours had nothing to do with their verdict, but he had eventually to adjourn the inquest for the purpose of obtaining the number of hours the man worked. The Coroner's name was Lancaster, who became bankrupt financially, as he was then in humanist and progressive ideas.

There was a lull in the agitation for three months. During March, 1866, various grades on the Stockton and Darlington line commenced an agitation. The platelayers' wages were as low as 18s. per week, and other grades were correspondingly low, and all were asking for an increase of wage. The labourers had a special grievance, having been for years paid every four or five weeks—five when that number of pay days came in the month. They obtained fortnightly payments, but as a retaliation the company dismissed forty of the men. Signalmen asked for 2s. per week increase, receiving 1s. The other grades had no notice taken of their communication, save this curt intimation from George Stephenson: "Finding you are not satisfied with your present position under the company, I have to give you notice that your services will not be required after May 12th. Please note." The engine drivers and firemen, who had received such scant courtesy, as a means of bettering their position, resolved to form a branch of the newly-formed society. The company, hearing of it, had the notices of ten of the men foremost in the proposal posted up, so determined was the company to stamp out at the initial stage any attempts at combination. A whole series of societies, all of them sectional, started about this time. Then an effort was made to amalgamate, but nowhere does Vincent appear as the advocate of such. One newspaper of May, 1866, says: "After various experiments the Railway Amalgamated Benefit Society was recently started to alleviate, as far as possible, the ills that are within reason complained of." Vincent, who never tired of advertising himself, so far as 1866

is concerned, does not do himself justice. In May, 1866, a meeting was held in the Guildhall Inn, Worcester, "to consider railway reforms and other matters." It seems to have been one of the largest meetings that had yet been held in the provinces. No name is given beyond Vincent's. Delegates from Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Chester, Crewe, Stoke, Dudley, Walsall, and Birkenhead were present. The report of the meeting fills nearly two columns. In June another meeting was held at the Crown Inn, Cheltenham, of which Caleb Parker was chairman, the object being "to assist in the formation of a society to be called the 'Amalgamated Benefit Society.'" At that meeting it was stated that the porter's wage was 2s. 6d. per day, exclusive of Sunday pay, and platelayers, 14s. to 16s. per week. The contribution for membership was to be 3d. per week. One of the benefits was to be £30 in case of accident. A district manager and president for the society were elected at the meeting.

At the same period the North British, Glasgow, and Caledonian were also moving, which so alarmed the company that they issued the following circular: "It having been reported to the directors of the several railway companies in Scotland that certain meetings have been held, and that others are in contemplation, for the express purpose of 'the attainment of our (railway servants') rights,' the directors give notice to the engine drivers, firemen, passenger and goods guards, porters, and pointsmen, that though they, with their several officers, are most desirous of meeting the legitimate demands of their employés, they will most firmly withstand dictation by the men, and they give notice that any attempt at combination by the respective employés will be met by the directors as may seem to them fit. The directors take the opportunity of cautioning those in their employ against combination or joining any union for the avowed purpose of dictating to their employers." This mixture of threats and caution is a specimen of what prevailed in the sixties. The companies, as the circular shows, were combined to resist Labour encroachments, but the men must not do the same. No wonder that even in these "good old times" one newspaper came out with a leader, of which these are a few sentences: "In this land of liberty our invaluable railway employés may work 12, 14, 16, and even 18 hours in the 24, having no half-hour for dinner. We say *may*, but unknown they must, eating on the way, and drinking their tea, or slops, covered by dust and dirt, but after presenting these and other grievances individually they must not have the liberty to unite or act in concert to obtain the liberty hitherto unattainable. . . . Capital has often no bowels or conscience, and, therefore, railway workers must be warned in time and look ahead, unite and subscribe ample funds, get honest and capable representatives, be judicious, cool, and firm. We say, above all, unite and you will stand, divided you fall, and will deserve to do so."

The railway clerks also held a meeting at Wilcocks' Assembly Rooms, Westminster Bridge Road. There were 500 present. A clerk on the G. W. R. said he had a wife and four children, and worked from midnight to three the next afternoon for 19s. a week, which included two and a-half hours' overtime in the hours for that pay. Though he had been through the Indian Mutiny, it took a great deal of moral courage to mount the platform, since he might be discharged the next day for so doing. Vincent, announced as the Secretary of the Amalgamated Society, said it was no uncommon thing for the men to be at work both week-day and Sunday without any rest day for weeks together. At Gloucester there was a man who had had no rest day for years. He knew engine drivers who had been at work up to twenty-three hours, and so exhausted that they fell into a lethargic sleep on the footplate of their engines, utterly unconscious of falling rain or snow, whilst they were taking coal or water for the next journey. At Carlisle a pointsman had kept a record of his day's work. In one day he pulled 1,425 levers. He had seen signalmen asleep in the signal box, the train in his section stopping because he was asleep, and another in the next section for the same reason. The average wage was from 16s. to 17s. 6d. per week. Putley, the Secretary of the Enginemen's Association, pledged the support of his society in co-operative action in agitating for the results wished for, to attain which a society was already in existence and possessed nearly 10,000 members.

At the same time there was a threatened strike at Dundee and Arbroath. In September, 1866, under the auspices of the Railway Workers' Provident Association, the chair was taken by Mark Meadows, who had formerly been in the employ of the Midland Railway Company for sixteen years, but was dismissed for his endeavours to form a union. No misconduct of any kind was alleged against him. When the present society was established he took an interest in the movement, and on one occasion went as a deputation to Nottingham, in the absence of Vincent and Sleet, and so was dismissed. He had, he said, worked thirty-six consecutive hours for 3s. 6d. In explaining the objects of the society, which had among them funds for widows and orphans and a superannuation scheme, he urged them to join. Vincent expressed the hope that by the end of the year he would have a document signed by 70,000 railwaymen, to be presented to the different railway boards. The L. & N. W. had sought to intimidate the men from joining by discharging eight men for taking part in the affairs of the society. The present writer has in his possession one of the cards of this society for the year 1866. It is signed by Mark Meadows, mentioned above, as the secretary of the branch. The title of the society on the card is "Railway United Goods and Passenger Guards, Brakesmen, Shunters, Pointsmen, Yardsmen, Signalmen, Switchmen, Porters, Platelayers' and Amalgamated Benefit Society." The premium entries commence August 16th, 1866. It has an engine on the front, and says at the bottom

of the page: "This card must be produced at all times when money is paid, and the secretary's or district manager's signature obtained.— C. B. Vincent, Secretary."

The enginemen of the Stockton and Darlington Railway threatened to strike unless certain demands were conceded, with the result that some drivers and firemen received their notices, which the men saw plainly was an intention to intimidate the whole of them, and to prevent them from combining, as the men discharged were among the most prominent members of the Enginemen's Society, their offices being in London.

These movements were not confined to one or two railways, and are samples from the many held at that time, but most of the societies then in existence had to work by stealth, the lack of openness hindering really effective work and the guarantee of success. A letter from a man evidently unused to letter-writing appeared at that time, which in its simple unlettered form conveys the spirit which prevailed at that period on both sides: "I have been discharged because the officials thought I was taking an active part in forming a union among the employés. Surveyor says to me, 'You men want to be masters.' My reply was, that the men wanted a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, and you masters are in a fair way to get it. 'How so?' says he. Because he is driving the men into the union he is better than fifty employés in establishing a union. 'How do you make that out?' says he. 'By discharging the men,' was my reply." The present writer has traced the development of this man from point to point, and it presents one of the most remarkable examples of the espionage that then prevailed. Letters to him were intercepted. His own fellow workmen were set as spies upon his actions. His clothing was rifled to obtain incriminating correspondence that was sent him. Postmen were waylaid to read the postmark of letters, and it would seem as if every possible ingenuity and device was taken in order to obtain evidence of what was going on, and they were successful. Papers that were sent to him had to be directed to a distant place, from which he had to fetch them, but even in the going he was watched. All the doings of the company shed a flood of light upon that period. No man could trust his brother, and this lack of confidence in those working side by side with one another hindered any effective work. They put trust in some men only to find that the holders of the trust carried the information to headquarters. This man day and night was watched, and they knew the number of letters and the postmarks of the correspondence that he fetched from a distance to avoid their knowing what was being done, so mean and so low were the tactics resorted to. The men in going to branch meetings had to resort to extraordinary means to get there, by back ways and over walls of gardens. It is little wonder that confidence was a plant of slow growth, and that wider action and plans were almost hopeless.

October, 1866, was the busiest month of that year. Meetings were held all over the country. Their number baffled the resources of the companies' espionage. They even resorted to "dud" bills for meetings that were never intended, the device being to spread the agencies of the companies and to defeat them. It was only the most daring that spoke at meetings. Outsiders, or men dismissed because they had been agitators or for dereliction of duty, were the only ones that could be used, with a few exceptions, to voice the prevailing discontent at the abuses which prevailed. The man above alluded to wrote to another, "The reason I have not written is that I am watched on every hand like a cat watching a mouse. They are like dogs at a bone when they get me," which, with other forcible examples, show the prevailing activity of the companies. So perforce outside sympathisers had to be utilised. But however effective such an one might be in grasp, or intelligence, or ability of expression, he could never come to grips with questions like one of their own. If Vincent had only possessed vision, resourcefulness and skill, organising ability of a high type, a knowledge of men, the prescience to know where to place his trust, even to place matter where he knew it would be betrayed—that is, to use the spy for misleading purposes—if he had done as wise leaders afterwards did he would have both divined and found the official mind better and heaped ridicule upon the betrayers. To have sent the official mind astray would have weakened the power of espionage. He was never a strong pilot, lacked initiative, had no wide vision, was self-conscious, was weak where he should have been strong, waited upon events rather than forcing them. If self-esteem was too large, resourcefulness and combativeness were too small. He was borne down by the current instead of breasting it, and it was then, as always, a difficulty to get him to answer letters. This was the time above all when the need was for a strong personality in the movement, but he let events and the movement drift, and both he and the men were to all intents and purposes lost. But even then we must temper his action with that of the time. He did good work, though he might have done better. He appeared in London at the Metropolitan Music Hall, Edgware Road, and London was for nearly three years the strongest point of any for efforts toward combination and improvements, probably because London was so large that the spy was lost in it, though he occasionally reared his head. At this meeting a protectionist effort started, and the title was merged into one with that sounding name. All the societies, large and small, had in their title the word "benefit." Protection, of course, was the benefit, and the greatest need at that, but the ruling idea was the friendly society element, which had not lapsed for a long while, in practice, till the A.S.R.S. took up whole-heartedly the protection form. This one, which was then advocated, was born in the north, and had only four "lodges," as they were then called, in all London. Vincent is announced here as the founder of this. He was not; but this

is the secret, he was on the fringe of them all, giving them counsel and guidance as far as the limitations of his nature allowed. He gave encouragement to new ventures, and still newer ones, when he had better made a strong bid for one society and invited all from every compass to join hands. He often caught up the work of others and called it his own.

He made a long speech here. It is described as eloquent. In that speech he cited that Mr. Lloyd, a director of the Midland, had boasted that the directors of the Midland, on principle, never worked the men more than twelve hours a day, but in an interview Vincent had with him he had proved that men were worked three days and three nights without taking off their clothes, giving the names of the men who so worked. Both the Midland and L. & N. W. were discharging old and faithful employées at this time for no other reason than that they had assisted in the formation of a union. Thomas Carter, a guard, with twenty-eight years' service to his credit, was one who was dismissed for that cause. These were some of the facts that he hurled at his audience; more for the Press than the audience, because the Press had all along helped the men. It was up to that time—1886—the best meeting that was held in London. It lasted three hours, and was wildly enthusiastic.

Then almost directly afterwards there came a lull. Dismissals were raining thick and fast everywhere, the companies evidently bent upon beating down Trade Unionism with a heavy, strong hand, and it was not till March, 1867, that a resurrection of effort came. That year became the most memorable of any of the decade. Railway labour was insurgent everywhere. The men were learning new methods of propaganda. They met the companies' wily methods with wiles, and the companies, unwillingly enough, had to yield a tardy acquiescence to the new spirit. They strove, acted when they could, and it was only their impotence that broke the sharper point of their dismissal sword. They could not sweep all away, there were too many, and these were too persistent for it. The few brave souls were hid in the great uprising, though occasionally the stroke fell. The drawbacks of such did not hinder steady progression. As one fell another took the standard. The more daring spirit of "do or die" and "better die than not do" seemed to animate them. The forcing of this now obsolete weapon had produced a reaction; the Press ear and voice had come to the rescue, and the London and provincial journals of that time lent space to chronicle types of victimisation. The men sensed the value of the fourth estate and made it a vehicle. Not that the prosecutors found their Sedan. The dangers of mistakes in railway life are too many not to furnish sufficient handles for dismissal. They waited for chances, took them when they came, and had evidence that it was in the interest of public safety that these deeds were done. It was using the same language that the men had used for reduction of hours. But courage, baffling methods, and knowledge aptly applied warded off

blows. Craft met craft. In 1867 it literally rained petitions. The quaintness and humour of some make them literary curiosities. There is a general sameness, with here and there one going off the beaten track of language. They show, however, a general identity. The various unions had found a common voice in need, showing a gathering of the clans, however much they stood apart in the six societies that were then working. The Signalmen and Pointsmen, and the Guards that had started on the Brighton, the Amalgamated Benefit, and the Enginemen's, and the Protectionist Society just referred to seemed to have in it the sanest element of all, and it worked with vigour and determination. Yet Vincent, in his "Authentic History," dismisses this period in less than a page and a-half. The only explanation is that they were working without him and apart from him, which was a token of their wisdom. The first petition that appeared was one from the L. & S. W. :—

"Gentlemen.—We, the enginemen and firemen employed on the London and South-Western Railway under you, have been long conferring together respecting our conditions, and have unanimously agreed to a series of resolutions regarding certain alterations in the terms of our engagements which we respectfully submit to your consideration, and which we conceive would be for the benefit of the company were they adopted. We are induced to put them before you as a whole because, if granted in that way, it would remove all cause of dissatisfaction and stimulate the servants of the company to the active and conscientious discharge of their duties. We are desirous of asking nothing that is unreasonable, and will be glad to receive and answer any suggestions you may offer on the subject.

"1. That ten hours constitute a day's work, all over ten to be paid for at the rate of two hours for a quarter. All Sunday duty to be paid for at time and a-half.

"2. That 150 miles for passenger men on the main line be equal to one day's work; 120 miles for local or branch lines.

"3. That a stated day be allowed in each week from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and if required to work on that day to be paid for at time and a-half.

"4. That drivers' wages be as follows: First six months, 6s. per day; second six months, 6s. 6d. per day; after twelve months, 7s. 6d. per day.

"5. That firemen's wages be: First six months, 3s. 6d. per day; second six months, 4s. per day; twelve months, 4s. 6d. per day.

"6. That every engineman and fireman being sent away on duty rendering it necessary for him to reside away from home shall be allowed for his expenses 2s. 6d. per night.

"7. That an overcoat be supplied to every engineman and fireman once a year, and that they be allowed to retain the old one.

“ 8. That, as a rule, all enginemen and firemen have nine hours clear off duty before being called upon to go out again.

“ We beg also to call your attention to the fact that £10 has been deducted from the wages of the drivers, and £5 from those of the firemen. With this arrangement we are dissatisfied, and beg most respectfully in all cases where this has been done that such amount be returned. We likewise desire to suggest that, if possible, no enginemen or firemen shall work more than every alternate Sunday.

“ We beg to state that many enginemen and firemen have been subject to heavy fines and punishments without having a fair or impartial hearing, and if we are not satisfied with our superintendent's decision that we should by a committee of enginemen and firemen be allowed the privilege of placing the matter before you.”

This is the best and most reasoned document among the shower of petitions that followed. Here and there are variations in language and occasional variations in ideas to make them accord with the varying local circumstances. Some contain the following: “ That firemen be promoted to drivers according to seniority and length of service.” But the sameness is palpable, the organised expression evident, showing also that the enginemen were the best organised and had the most capable leaders of any of the sections.

Instead of following each petition on its road, a clearer idea of the events which ensued will be better seen if we follow them as far as we can chronologically, noting, in some cases, the contemptuous rejection, the dallying, the waiting of one company for the action of the others, how decisions were made, were received, and the results in strikes or inaction. It is written large everywhere that the enginemen's action set all the others into being. The enginemen were the leaders and the mainstay of all agitation.

The first reply is to the petition of the North-Eastern men. It is dated March 15th, 1867. “ The directors regret that any considerable number of enginemen should have given their support to the demands which the memorial contained. The wages paid by the N. E. were fully equal to, and rather above, the current wages of the district, but if their demands were complied with the amount now paid would be for drivers and firemen increased by more than 80 per cent. Referring to the second point in the memorial, in which the drivers and firemen asked to be promoted according to seniority, that in any case implicating seriously any of the men the case could be settled by the arbitration of the men in conjunction with the board of directors or Mr. Fletcher, and that they involved questions of discipline of so serious a character that, deeply impressed with the responsibility which rests upon them to use the best means to secure the safety of those who travel on their lines, they would not hesitate to reject any of the conditions which embodied these requirements. Deciding on the memorial as a whole, the directors have no doubt or hesitation in refusing to accede to the demands of the memorial.”

This meant war, and war it became. The enginemen held a meeting, and fervent and fiery speeches were made, and they unanimously adopted this resolution: "That the N. E. enginemen, having been contemptuously repulsed by the board of directors in their respectful attempt to obtain a redress of their grievances, the Central Committee recommend that they send in their notices at once, and pledge themselves to procure the support of their fellow members throughout the kingdom." The results follow later.

In the meantime the L. B. & S. C. were getting restive at the delay of a reply to a similarly worded petition, so the whole body sent in their notices to the company, and it was only then that the directors considered a reply was necessary. Previous to this a meeting of the enginemen of London was held at Exeter Hall protesting against the delayed answer, which made it quite evident that the companies were acting together. Correspondence was going to and fro, which, with the intervals between board meetings, made the delay inevitable.

At the meeting in Exeter Hall most of the speakers' names were announced, an indication in itself of better tactics and greater strength. The tone of the meeting was that they were only asking again for what had been previously filched from them. Said one: "We only ask for the wages given twenty years ago for the same duties." They then received on the L. & N. W. 7s. for drivers, on other lines 7s. 6d., and even 8s. They had wisely left the points in the memorial which were local and exceptional to the discretion of the various deputations. But these had been flouted and scorned, and no consideration for any essential point had been dealt with. Edson moved that the memorial for ten hours be adhered to, with the scale of wages which had been agreed to by the men in November of the previous year. Bodley, a driver, seconded. Howe, a Midland driver, seconded a resolution for the whole memorial and nothing less. Castle also moved, seeing the company had protested in the Press and in other ways that the men sought to embarrass them: "That this meeting of the enginemen of England disclaim any intention of embarrassing the directors or inconveniencing the public, but having endeavoured in various ways the last five years to get their grievances adjusted, think the concessions they now ask for should be granted."

The Brighton directors, as if awaking from a long sleep, issued a circular to the drivers and firemen setting forth the determination arrived at by them in reference to the presented memorial. The reply, unlike the N. E.'s, was conciliatory, and "they hoped it would be one which would be satisfactory to all parties—the proprietors, the men and the public." With regard to the time question, they agreed to sixty hours per week of six working days, and all the time worked beyond to be paid at overtime rate of eight hours per day. With reference to the wages, the main objection which they saw in the scale suggested by the memorial was recognised by the older and more experienced drivers. It would be both unjust

and inexpedient that all should be placed on a footing of equality as regards pay irrespective of experience and the other qualities which constitute a first-class driver, as distinguished from an ordinary driver. The directors felt no difficulty in giving an assurance that the number of men receiving the maximum would be steadily increased. A corresponding number of firemen would also be maintained at a rate of pay on terms, generally at least as favourable as may prevail on any railway in the kingdom. The several requests in the memorial with regard to overcoats, extra pay when the men were employed so that they must reside from home, the hours of duty, and the reckoning for Sunday duty were conceded, and the directors would be quite ready to see henceforth any man who might be dissatisfied, and as the public had a vital interest in the question they were quite willing to leave to the settlement of a public board, say, the Board of Trade, any question which from time to time they might be unable to adjust between them by themselves.

In less than a week a deputation waited upon the directors at London Bridge on an understanding come to by them on the previous Friday week, that an adjournment of the determination of the men to leave the service should their requirements not be complied with, should not take place for a week in order to afford the board time to consider the whole question. The strong objection of the deputation was that the advance of wages proposed by the directors was to take place every twelve months at the option of the superintendent, and the feeling they expressed was that this arrangement would occasion the continuance of a grievance which they had for a long time complained of, namely, a system of favouritism would still continue to be pursued. With the exception of the question of the wages and the objection to the power given to the superintendent, all other requirements were complied with. The board declined to accede to the views of the deputation on these, and so the men decided to adhere to their motion for quitting the service, and, therefore, would not work any of the Brighton trains on the Tuesday.

The strike took place on the Tuesday, and all the men, with the exception of two or three drivers and from twenty to thirty firemen in the London district, absented themselves from duty. At Brighton a similar decision took place, where, in all, about 350 men absented themselves. They had all received a circular signed by the traffic manager, Mr. George Hawkins, cautioning them that by the act of striking, if they did it, they would be leaving the company, and they would forfeit all right to the Superannuation Fund. But, at the same time, the circular, like the preceding reply, was conciliatory. During the day the directors met at London Bridge and passed three resolutions, which were posted about the stations:—

“That, in accordance with the recommendation of Mr. Craven and Mr. Hawkins, the directors will, with great pleasure, give as a gratuity two guineas to each driver and one more to each fireman

who has not deserted his post this day, while so many are endeavouring to force the directors to comply with demands which they consider unreasonable.

“That any driver who was previously receiving a lesser sum shall at once be advanced to the first-class and receive 7s. 6d. per day, with the assurance that come what may the directors will employ them at the above rates so long as they perform their duty.

“That, believing that a large majority of those who are out will, upon reflection, regret having pushed matters to such an extremity, they are willing to receive back into the service any of the old hands who may rejoin it not later than Thursday next.”

As might readily be conceived, confusion and excitement abounded at this novelty of a strike on a railway. They had been like “dumb driven cattle,” and now they were heroes in strife. The placidity with which they had borne their burdens without murmuring, or if murmuring not seeking to remove them, was past. There was an alteration; they took to themselves a voice and spoke; had the manliness and courage to strike. Virtually all traffic was suspended on the Brighton, with a few exceptions, where trains were manned by the handful of blacklegs and the inspectors and engineers who were the tools of the company. It was complete between London, Eastbourne, and St. Leonards. The Epsom Spring Meeting had opened that day, and the hundreds of sportsmen made the air resound with other than sportive language. They had intended to go down to Epsom by train, and they expressed themselves with freedom and vigour, impartially, both of the men and the company. The officials and the men on duty at London had a trying time of it. On the branch line, where some trains were run, they reduced the speed to twenty miles an hour. They were driven by travelling inspectors and by foremen of works, being piloted by those who knew the signals. A short service was run between Crystal Palace and London Bridge, and also between the latter place and Croydon. Where main line trains did run they were made up of twenty coaches as a maximum. The company retaliated by giving the men employed at the sheds notice, some of them being the sons of the strikers. On Wednesday morning the officials and the drivers had an interview, but they came to no agreement, and the men determined to keep out. The men at the Brighton end also had an interview with the officials, and decided to go back to work, so that more trains were run the next day. In the afternoon the London men had another interview with the officials. They had been discouraged in the morning by the Brighton defection, but expressed a determination not to give way; but in the afternoon discussion with the officials they received an assurance that they would have a full opportunity of placing their claims before the company for the higher rate, and so they went back to work.

The following circular was issued by the union:—

“The Engine Drivers and Firemen’s United Society,
“31, Bridge Street, Strand,
“March 27th, 1867.

“Dear Sir,—The strike on the Brighton Railway is virtually at an end. The only point at issue between the men and the directors, namely, the conditions on which the men should receive their promotions, has been arranged by the authorities agreeing that if any men are passed over they will have the right of appeal to the board of directors, and their claims will be considered. The men ask no more than this, and the Brighton directors having conceded every other point, they have resolved to trust themselves to the upright dealing of the men, with whom they have no especial quarrel, and hope that the future relations may be both amicable and satisfactory.

“Yours truly,
“J. O. PUTLEY.”

Meanwhile the drivers and firemen on the Midland had passed a resolution to send in their notices on the 2nd of April, and a fear was expressed that the men similarly employed on the Newcastle, York, and Malton sections would strike, as 960 had expressed themselves as intending to do on the 20th of April, unless in the meantime their demands were acceded to. All these things gave wings to fears by the other companies, and the drivers on the Caledonian, notwithstanding the bellicose attitude of the Scottish directors, received an advance of 3s. per week, the labourers 1s., and with a lying flourish the company advanced to the Press that it had been obtained by the men without a petition, and that the company gave out of the depth of their benevolent hearts unasked for. It was only a question of words. They had agitated, but had not framed anything. Only one touch was wanted to make it complete, and that was to say the men had it without wanting it.

When the threat to the N.E. men had been launched those on the Stockton and Darlington section had agreed to throw in their lot with them if it came to a struggle, and the Midland men advanced their preparations to fight with them if necessary. What were evidently inspired paragraphs from other railways appeared in the Press. At the beginning of April this went out: “The present week, it is believed, will see the end of the mileage system and the dispute of the shed day and other matters.” “The engine drivers of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway had an interview with the superintendent of the line on Saturday, and we have the authority for stating that the ten hours per day were granted, with the other principal requests of the memorialists.” “The ten hours per day have been granted to the North London railwaymen and many grievances redressed. The same may be said of the Brecon and Merthyr and other companies in the West of England.”

London, however, was still agitating. The enginemmen of the South-Eastern held a meeting at Bermondsey. Millman was chairman. They met to hear the opinions of the leaders respecting the memorial sent in to the company asking for a ten-hour day, instead of the seventy-two hours per week they were then working. They had been among the first to memorialise the company for shorter hours and more money. The leaders said they wanted to be fair to the company, and to say that they granted both requests at the time, but the system which they put in vogue was so manifestly unjust that it had hardly been granted before they found that the extra time required to be worked brought a day's work to seventeen or eighteen hours, and things were not bettered, but made worse, and by either a confusion of the reporters or the speakers they determined that as soon as the ten hours had been conceded they would again memorialise.

The N. E. men also met at the Friendly Societies Hall, York, to consider the full import of what had been done, and whether there was any possibility of staying the proposed stoppage. The result of the interview with the board and Mr. Fletcher was given, which the meeting considered unsatisfactory. Delegates from the L. & N. W. and the G. N. were present watching events. Thompson, the President of the society, and Chairman of the Central Committee, with Putley, Secretary, were present. Mr. Fletcher had promised that as soon as other companies had improved the terms upon which their men were working the men of the N. E. would be placed upon the same footing. They again resolved to persist in the ten-hour day, two hours' overtime a quarter of a day, and Sunday time and a-half. They expressed themselves as quite firm on the intent to receive nothing less than these. They were to be the irreducible minimum, but were quite willing to enter upon a discussion with the company to take into account any local circumstances. The meeting lasted three hours, and was at times very heated. Matters were soon precipitated and calm consideration of the question denied. Those on the Stockton and Darlington section and the enginemmen of the goods section ceased work, alleging that faith had been broken with them and that the arrangements agreed upon with Mr. Fletcher, the loco. superintendent, had been broken by their loco. foreman, Mr. Bell. It appears that the men, having been promised a certain wage, were also with it led to believe that they should have one day off a week as shed day with pay, but instead they were put off without pay. They had an interview with the foreman, but could not agree, and so struck, and soon the immense traffic from the Durham coalfields and the adjoining counties was stopped. The strike spread, reaching Newcastle and other places. It was a strike of section within a section, but one daring passenger driver at Darlington struck with them.

Fletcher, on his part, contended that so far from him breaking faith with the men, it was themselves who were at fault; that he

had again and again invited them to come to him and discuss quite frankly any matter which they thought needed adjustment, and in any dispute he would not only be willing but glad to meet them with a view to adjustment. The strike went on and became very bitter on both sides. The men also contended that they were sold "lock, stock, and barrel" by their fellows, and that those who had pledged themselves to help one another were among the first to take their engine when they stepped down from the footplate. The strike failed, as it was by its very nature doomed to. The Press lied about the facts. This appeared in large type: "The Engine Drivers' Strike. The strike may now, so far as the company is concerned, be said to have terminated. There may be more of the old hands go in—there undoubtedly will every day—but the company has now a sufficient staff to carry out their arrangements. On Monday the old hands who had been accepted by Mr. Kelland took out engines to Darlington. Eighteen firemen were granted passes from Darlington to Newcastle with a view to their being taken on. All the men are required to leave the union before they are received back, and the leaders of the strike will not, it is plainly stated by the officials, be received back under any circumstances. The guards who struck and have remained out have mostly applied to be taken back, but most of their places have been filled. On this line the company's solicitors have drawn up a new form of contract, the former one having been too indefinite. All hands are required to sign this document."

Some of the men were summoned for breach of contract. The names were: Henry Bates, Robert Bone, Thomas Watson, William Appleby, George Brewin, Thomas Davison, Thomas Goss, Thomas Routledge, and Alexander Gray. Jonathan Clark, J.P., and Roberts, of Manchester, defended the men. The bench, after a long deliberation, found that one of the men, Thomas Davison, had been guilty of a breach of contract with the company without lawful excuse, but postponed sentence till May 28th to allow matters to be amicably settled, if possible. I have been unable to trace the further result. Other summonses were issued against Thomas Adamson, William Bell, G. Heavyside, W. Reed, W. Wake, W. Close, Drivers W. Theirwaits, R. Dodsworth, J. Coulson, M. Patterson, J. Mainterry, and W. Dobson, fireman. The case against them was adjourned and afterwards withdrawn and their pay forfeited, as follows: Heavyside, £4 16s. 3d; Reed, £5 5s.; Bell, £6 13s.; Close, £5 12s.; Theirwaits, £2 17s. 2½d.; Dodsworth, £2 16s.

Large meetings were held in the provinces and London to consider what could be done to aid the men. A meeting held at Leeds suggested as a measure tending to reconciliation that a man from each of the four big companies having lines in Yorkshire should wait upon the N. E. directors and show them the turns which they were working, which were superior to the N. E., and ask that company to treat their servants as other companies did. An accusation is hardly the preliminary step to reconciliation, but the

resolution, which Alderman Carter seconded, was carried with acclamation, with a rider. At another town over 1,000 signalmen met to consider a circular from the Central Committee in London. A long discussion took place with reference to the position of the men on strike on the N. E. and the advisability of calling out the men on other railways. There was a unanimous condemnation of the other railways who had come to the rescue of the N. E., but the meeting could not screw up courage to striking point, because they said the N. E. enginemen had done the same thing as other companies—helped to break their fellow workers' strike. It looks as if those who in voting for a strike voted because they knew they would be in a minority in a general decision. At Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street, London, still greater confusion reigned. They debated the question the whole day and far into the night, with periods of calm and storm, reason and unreason, and the jostling views produced heat. They were convinced on the thing that did not matter; unconvinced on the thing that did matter. They were convinced quite firmly of the inefficient way in which the traffic was worked on the N. E., but they were unconvinced that they could hold up all by striking with them. So, again, they were convinced that the loss of property was heavy, and so induced themselves to believe that the company could not hold out much longer, and so their best policy would be to wait till the company failed to hold out, instead of making them run out by decided action themselves. But still, just to show how brave they were, what good Trade Union blood they had in their veins, they were prepared to advise the men to hold out for the present, and assured them of every assistance the society could render. But strike! Oh, no, that could not be, and the final finding was this wishy-washy thing: "They considered it inadvisable at present to withdraw all labour." They went home no doubt contented that they had done a good day's work; that after such an arduous day they really had done good service to the N. E. men, and went to bed untroubled with insomnia. No doubt it was inadvisable to have struck, because a folly had been committed of making a section of a strike within a section; but Trade Unionism here was writ down by cowardice and betrayal, even though folly had made a false move. Cowardice was evident throughout the whole proceeding. The strike was estimated to have cost the N. E. £80,000.

Living in such a period of excitement and storm, it is like passing from a cyclone to death-like stillness to read that the drivers on the Caledonian, Glasgow and South-Western, and North British Railways in Scotland met at Glasgow to draw up a petition for submission to the directors. Then we read again of the assuring news: "A most satisfactory settlement of engine drivers and firemen has at last been effected on the announcement of Sir Daniel Gooch, chairman of the G. W. Company." But the men did not say so. This was the "satisfactory settlement." Evidence is the real thing

that tells: Engine drivers' wages the first year were 5s. 6d.; second year, 6s.; third year, 6s. 6d.; after serving seven years, 7s., with the same premium. Firemen: First year, 3s. 6d.; second year, 3s. 9d.; third year, 4s. But if a majority of the railways out of London give 4s. 6d., and a maximum of 5s. after five years' service, so will they.

The year 1867 was, from the time of the formation of railways, one of the most eventful for Labour. It had many a record of failure, but it had much success. Labour had awakened and had tested its strength, and those tests eventuating alike in failure and success will have a bearing upon the future.

The next three years was a period of somnolence. They had organised and failed largely. Organisation was killed for the time being; but watch it, wait, the giant will awake from his sleep, learn the lessons of failure, the greatest of which was sectionalism. The last record goes out, quite fittingly, with the utterance of a fool. It was at a meeting in Manchester. The chairman's oracular utterance was this: "Why should not the Trade Unions go on accumulating their funds, so that in a few years they would be in a position to lease one of the lines which were to let in the market and work it with their own staff of men." The same idea in another form was carried into the early history of the A.S.R.S., but it was none the less folly, the greater perhaps because we had time to know more. Garrity once boasted, and that at a time when all the securities of the A.S.R.S. could have comfortably been put into the fold of a small envelope without bursting it, that they could buy up a railway, but he did not tell them that he meant the Golden Valley Railway, which at that time had only one engine.

For over two years the stillness of death reigned. Every one of the organisations in 1867 died. It looked as if Trade Unionism on railways was for ever dead. Thompson went to New Orleans. The paper, "The Train," started by Edwards, Thompson, and Putley, lived its short day and died. Then commenced once more wholesale dismissals of the men who had taken part in Labour matters. It is not flattery to our type to say that these men were among the best of their employés. They were thoughtful, because thought is always with those who see the necessity of organisation. It was the companies' hour of triumph. They used their power in the harshest form, and many a brave soul went under. The leaders were struck down, or most of them; terror seized the rank and file; and then silence. But silence did not prevail in the wider field of Labour.

The year 1867 was a period of strikes and lock-outs, and they grew rather than diminished to the year of our birth. Trade Unions came to be regarded as a public nuisance which must be put down by the strong hand of the law, and many urged it. The will was with them, but not the means. In the public discussions which ensued economists, politicians, and even novelists rushed into the

fray, whilst strikes and lock-outs continued to grow. But a few brainy publicists, men of remarkable ability, kept the issue clear and the traducers at bay by sheer force of intellect. They were men like Tom Hughes, Frederic Harrison, Professor Rogers, the brothers Crompton, Professor Beasley, Lloyd Jones, and many others. The Government was obliged to take action, and appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the working of Trade Unions, and so as to get the fullest evidence they started to work in 1867, and with fair impartiality fulfilled it. Public opinion had demanded this, and they bowed to its demand. The Trade Unions welcomed it, knowing that given a fair field they would be able to dissociate themselves from criminal acts. Indemnity was given to those likely to have committed criminal acts, so that nothing should be lacking through fear and concealment. Not only was the agitation for suppression killed, but it led to the Trade Union Act of 1871. Not that this charter of freedom was complete, because few reformers hardly ever get all they want, or get quickly just what they desire. True, the Act was accompanied by the Criminal Law Amendment Act, which imposed fetters, but the Act in that form was the best that could be obtained.

The stalwarts named above either on the Commission or in the periodicals and newspapers of the day were untiring in their service. They were true friends of associative effort. The protagonists of the Trade Union world were Howell, Applegarth, and Allan. In Chapter V. of Webb's "History of Trade Unionism," "The Junta and Their Allies," may be found the history of that time, as also in Howell's "Conflicts of Capital and Labour." One of the allies was George Odger, a shoemaker. All these men were prominent London Radicals. Bethnal Green honoured Howell by returning him to Parliament after failures at Aylesbury and elsewhere. Battersea honoured Odger by naming a street after him. Thornton Heath is honouring Applegarth by erecting an institute bearing his name. Their greatest honour is the service they rendered to Labour. One little Bill that Howell (who had a remarkable knack of getting Bills through Parliament) passed has saved the A.S.R.S. and its offspring the N.U.R. hundreds of thousands of pounds. It freed the taxation of its provident funds.

Chapter III.

THE BIRTH OF THE A.S.R.S.

WE left railwaymen in 1867 with Trade Unionism seemingly blotted out. The burdens which had been temporarily lifted were reimposed heavier than before, and dismissals followed, in one case to batch of fifty. Organised effort bowed down before it and was swept away by the flood. But reformers never accept the defeat of an object as the last word in effort. It is but the phase of the hour; newer forms of action and more earnest efforts are made, profiting from the experience of the past. There were three years of inaction, but they must have been years of thought. Stunned and bewildered, as they were for a time, they knew the way to salvation. They had realised that sectional efforts failed them; the need was the strength of universalism. Sectional efforts may work and achieve small things, but generally it is only when outside themselves there is the surer strength of an all-embracing society. Without that shield and collective strength, wide opinions, numbers, all men as one man, and grades obliterated for defensive and offensive action there is little hope. With it, given optimism, courage, just demands, and wide plans, it is the more likely to bring success. If that does not, nothing can. We had during those three years this fact, that outside Labour was aggressive, whilst railwaymen were quiescent. Strikes and lock-outs abounded. It was a time of advancing trade. Reform was in the air. The Trade Union charter was signed. Education was taking shape. Labour was laying amidst much strife the foundation of better things. The din of war was in the ear. So when 1870 came railwaymen were also stirred with Labour impulses. But hope did not take hold of action. They wanted to do something, but there stood the dark background of 1867. They saw the value of self-help, but somehow could not put it to usury. Some of the old leaders were ready, but not the rank and file. Distrust was everywhere, and there was fear in moving. The Press was open, and some with capable pens took opportunity by the hand. Their articles had to be anonymous. They had seen men with resourcefulness, courage, eloquence, and skill go under, and they were to be excused if they feared to put open organisation to the touch. The previous leaders had been in advance of their times. So they took the only available weapon for the time being for recreative process. The material they had to work upon was sluggish in thought, and still more so in action. They had to educate and foster an imagination. Ignorance is always suspicious, and these uneducated

were so, and though men had failed, sometimes because others had failed them, they were now feeling their way to a re-birth of organisation which had always remained a hope. The complaints of long hours and low wages caught the public ear and drew to them sympathisers. Michael Thomas Bass was one of the most critical and far-seeing. He was a keen man of business, and a millionaire, and so could ally effort with cash. John Graham, then stationed at Derby, had been writing in the Press, and this effort, with other facts, caught the eye of Bass. He was speaking at a festival of the Engineers and alluded to what railwaymen had to endure. John, thinking that Bass was under the impression that he was addressing railwaymen, wrote in a correcting form, which led to further correspondence and increased activity by Bass. A remedy was needed, and Bass sought to obtain it. He tried the forum of a shareholders' meeting; that failed him. He took to the Press, and his messages had a wide fling. In July, 1870, he carried the same form of propaganda to the House of Commons and made that a sounding board. The battle then waged thick and fast, and for about four months it was the dominant feature of newspaper controversy. Price, the chairman of the Midland, resented the references to his company, and many lengthy letters appeared. The "Daily Telegraph" took up the cause of the men, and was by far away their best Press voice. It had then a feature of doing great things, and whatever it took in hand to do made success an aim, and succeeded. The "Daily Telegraph" was the home of all need. Looking back upon its work in such cases, the Editor was able to place his hand upon the best man for the work that needed doing. Cost was a secondary consideration.

To bring within the pages of this book the Parliamentary speeches, the questions and answers in the House of Commons and "another place," the Bass and Price correspondence and speeches, the newspaper articles of that time would take a hundred pages. You have in them the cause of the reawakening of railwaymen. The articles were devoured, talked of, comparisons made between stated and actual facts, and the wide disparity with what was and what was declared. They looked with shaded eyes into the past and hoped for a revival of the 'sixties efforts. Meetings were suggested, and so from that July, 1870, to September meetings were held here and there, and the abuses found a voice. The individual protesting voice seemed as if it had but shouted in the air, and brought back nothing but an echo. Officialism was supreme, and what was done was done by stealth. The meetings grew in number and size. Accidents on railways accentuated the agitation. The year 1870 had been one of railway accidents. They followed on the heels of each other, so that the public had not time to forget the last before a new one occurred. One was at Newark, where an excursion had collided with a goods train, and eighteen were killed. During the next month, July, with a fortnight between, a goods and a mail train collided at Carlisle, and six were killed. At Tamworth, on September 14th,



M. T. BASS, M.P. (Derby), Founder

a L. & N. W. mail train ran into a siding and from the siding into the river, and three were killed. At Harrow, November 26th, a Liverpool express and a coal train of the same company came into collision, and seven were killed. An express and coal train collided at Brockley Whin, N. E., fifteen were killed. On December 12th at Stairfoot, M. S. & L., a train divided, and fourteen were killed. On December 26th at Hatfield, G. N., eight were killed, the accident being caused by a breaking tyre. These were terrible happenings, so that whilst the agitation against long hours was going on these were fresh in the public mind. No great accident, strangely enough, happened in 1871. But these facts showed the public that danger lay in long hours, so that signalmen's long hours were stressed in leading articles, such as "Danger in the Signal Box" and "Danger on the Line."

So when in 1871 the linesmen on the Irish N. W. struck to raise their wages from 10s. to 13s. a week and 400 on the G. W. of England, the public knew they were justified. Of the latter only a few went back. It was a feeble spurt and useless. They had no organisation behind them, and if they had such a small section would have met with inevitable defeat.

The work of Bass had also this effect: it brought a few men together. When he undertook a cause it was with all his heart and soul. Railwaymen wrote him, and when he had found a reliable man with whom he could deposit a secret he sought his aid to know if others who wrote him were reliable. Vincent was one of those who had written to the Press under his own name. He wrote Bass, and Bass handed the letter to Graham, and he, John Abbott, and Jacob Hall conferred and advised Bass to employ Vincent on an organising tour. All these things brought the two or three together, sometimes a larger body. The little circle widened, they linked up with one another, and during that four months meetings were held, but no organisation took shape. Vincent, who met some of the old 'sixty warriors, was also a means of placing one in contact with another, making suggestions, advising meetings and organisation, which Bass, outside the work which he set him to do, looked upon with a friendly eye. With October came increasing meetings, but still organisation was lacking. In September, however, the London men had found their soul and were beginning to organise, still without a name, keeping things going by collections. Newcastle, Birmingham, Bristol, and other large places were doing the same, without a name, "and with no language but a cry."

The engineers had been working an hours movement, and eventually a compromise was made on nine hours. In October this appeared in the Press: "Nine Hours and the Railway Servants. Success of the nine-hour movement is beginning to tell on the whole N. E. district. The directors of the N.E. will from January next work their servants only nine hours a day. We recommend this to directors of other railways."

On the N. E. there began in October the "humble petition" once more. The North Shields and Tynemouth Branches asked for a sixty-hour week in place of eighty, which should include Sunday work, and an advance of 2s. per week, excluding Sunday, which should be paid for at an extra rate. It finished up with "And your petitioners will ever pray." As a religious man, I hope they did.

The first great meeting of that time, which in itself shows that organisation had grown, was on November 5th, at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, for shorter hours and higher wages. About 700 men, delegates from all the principal lines in the North of England, attended. Delegates imply an organisation of some kind, however loose it may be. They had invited Vincent, and he went. The chair was taken by a L. & Y. guard. Not a name is given in the report, Vincent's excepted. The proceedings were such that they caught both public imagination and sympathy. There was one long shriek of woe. Speaker after speaker gave out long-drawn tales of hardships. Diaries of fifty-six consecutive days of fifteen hours a day were read; longer hours still not running into so many days; men were compelled to sleep in their vans and on the footplate from over-fatigue. This cry from the depths caught the public ear. They wanted ten hours a day, overtime at eight hours' rate, and 2s. 6d. per week increase in wage. The modesty of it all! Bass sent them £100. The London men had been having meetings in the districts, had formulated a society and framed rules. Leeds, Manchester, Bolton, Wolverhampton, and Stratford, the key to the East, had all held enthusiastic meetings, but nothing had been done in the way of making a permanent organisation, although the agitations had gone on from July well into November. But at the beginning of November a committee in London drew up rules and prefixed them with this:—

"These rules are intended to be just,

And to employers not unkind,

But tyranny is the cause that must

Make sensible men combine;

Therefore, man had these designed

To teach his fellow man to be moral, true, and kind."

Which, I suppose, was meant to be poetry. The preamble further said: "Without laws and regulations no body of men can long subsist, either with comfort to themselves or with reputation among others. These rules and regulations are introduced as a system calculated to ensure harmony in conducting the business of the society and to cement a lasting friendship among the members.

"Shoulder to shoulder,

Hand in hand,

We'll adhere to one another."

No rules ever produced less than these aspiring sentiments, however well intentioned the framers. They were mocked at both in poetry and prose, and all the ingenuity that spite, sarcasm, and raillery could produce found vent in criticism of their production.

The Manchester meeting having been boomed by the Press, the London men thought they would also have one which would embrace all London, follow the same course, produce the rules and make a society with a name. On December 3rd, 1871, the London men definitely launched their movement, with the rules and names of the society. Mr. Pritchard, who was active in 1865, was in the chair, and explained that the object of the meeting was to inaugurate a movement under the auspices of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. Rules had been drawn up, and some of the different employés would address the meeting and state some of the grievances under which they laboured. A guard on the Brighton gave instances of long hours and the want of consideration from the public. A porter on the South-Eastern said that he and five other porters, each of them at a certain station, worked twelve and a-half hours a day for 365 days in the year; not six days to the week, but seven. Otherwise, if all the Sundays of the year were cut out it would be found that each worked fifteen and a-half hours a day. He believed they were the most degraded body of workers in existence, and it was full time they should come forward with a bold front and demand their rights. A shunter who had been employed for two and a-half years at Charing Cross—and everyone who knew that station knew how dangerous it was, with nearly 400 trains running in and out a day—worked twelve and a-half hours a day one day, thirteen and a-half another, and when, as now, they were short of men, was put on for another hour and a-half. A signalman on the West Brighton worked eighty-four hours a week, including Sunday. They had to get their meals as best they could.

The chairman said the Executive of the society could settle the programme of eight hours for signalmen and ten for others. Vincent spoke, and promised the support of Mr. Bass both inside and outside the House of Commons.

Mr. G. Chapman, the Honorary Secretary of the society, then submitted the rules of the new society, to be called the "Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants," whose objects "shall be to promote good and fair understanding between employers and employed; to prevent strikes; to protect and defend members against injustice; to secure ten hours for a fair day's labour and one day's extra pay for eight hours' overtime; the payment of the same rate for Sundays; to afford a ready means, by arbitration or otherwise, for the settlement of disputes; for granting temporary assistance to its members, and to provide legal assistance when necessary; to make special grants to members who desired to emigrate, and to found a Superannuation Fund for old and disabled members." The rules were sanctioned, subject to certain alterations by the Executive Committee, and the meeting, which was enthusiastic, concluded with votes of thanks to the Chairman, Mr. Vincent, and Mr. Chapman, the Secretary.

A meeting had been held at the Mechanics' Institute, Cockeridge Street, Leeds, but no society was proposed. The same applied to

the meeting on November 5th at Manchester. The agitation by Mr. Bass, naturally enough, without any guidance of a central society, caused many to write to him. Previous to that, Mr. Joseph Wagg, who presided at that meeting, had written Mr. Bass: "Sir,—We, the undersigned servants of the L. & N. W. Railway Company at Manchester, beg to inform you that, having commenced an agitation for an advance of wages and the reduction of our present working hours, we humbly solicit your sympathy and support on our behalf. We have already held a meeting, at which some ninety or a hundred men were present, and we propose to hold another at the Free Trade Hall on November 5th, and we feel that unless some other influence except our own is thrown into the scale the agitation will prove fruitless. We therefore respectfully invite your attendance on the date named, where you will have an opportunity of hearing the grievances of the men from their own mouths. We are sorry to be compelled to discuss such questions on the Sabbath, but, as you are well aware, that is the only day on which a large body of railwaymen can be brought together, their duties preventing them from attending any other time. Hoping you will use your best endeavours in obtaining for us that which has been obtained through your influence for the servants of other companies.—We are, sir, your obedient servants (signed on behalf of the enginemen, firemen, brakesmen, and shunters of the L. & N. W., L. & Y., and M. S. Railways)." Bass replied that he believed the chairman and authorities of the Midland Company were seriously and heartily engaged in endeavouring to remove every reasonable ground for complaint on the part of their servants, and he had reason for believing that Mr. Moore would not be unwilling to move in the same direction, but he pleaded his state of health for non-attendance.

Cordwell, who afterwards became so prominent in the A.S.R.S., wrote to him on November 30th, nearly a month after the Manchester meeting. It seems surprising that Cordwell knew nothing of the Manchester Free Trade Hall meeting. It also sheds a light on the fact that various men were working in different directions unknown to each other, sometimes at near quarters. It shows how secretly they had to work, though in the case of that meeting it had wide publicity.

"Mr. T. Bass, M.P.

"Respected Sir,—At a meeting of enginemen, firemen, shunters, brakesmen, and others held on Sunday, the 26th November, in the Temperance Hall, Fairfield, Manchester, for the purpose of considering the desirability of forming a society for the mutual protection and benefit of railway employés, it was proposed, seconded, and unanimously adopted, that such a society be formed. It was mentioned that such a society had been formed at Taunton, and I was instructed to write you from such meeting asking you to furnish us with a copy of rules for our guidance. It was also suggested that each branch should

elect its own officers and dispose of its own funds, paying an annual sum to the Executive Committee, wherever it was held. I should feel obliged if you would grant us this request, together with any suggestion which you think would be good for us to adopt. With thanks for your past favour,

“I remain, your very obedient servant,

“JAMES CORDWELL, Secretary (pro tem.).”

It also shows that even if Cordwell did know of the Free Trade Hall meeting no concrete effort had been made for a central organisation, nor did he know that the London men had launched rules for a society with a given name, the date of the rules being November 28th, 1871. Bass replied to Cordwell's letter sympathetically, and in the letter said: “I heartily approve of your project of creating a general union of railway servants for all reasonable and lawful purposes, and if your future designs are marked by the same good sense, discernment, and moderation which have characterised your proceedings hitherto, you will carry with you the best sympathies of the public and ensure the ultimate and perhaps not very distant success of every reasonable demand. As you cannot start a society on the large scale you contemplate without expenses that will be exceptional, I have to request you will inform your Committee that as soon as the society is determined upon I shall beg of them to accept a hundred guineas towards preliminary expenses.”

Following on the London meeting of December 3rd, when the society was definitely launched, with approved rules, another one still larger was held at the Lambeth Baths, Westminster Bridge Road, London. It was organised by Robert Whitmore, of Battersea Branch, one among the first half-dozen that had been formed in London. “Old Bob,” as he afterwards came to be familiarly called, and who all the while he was in the society was a source of trouble, was eventually expelled, had a penchant for letter-writing, not always of the most agreeable type, wrote to various individuals to attend, and received good wishes from them for the well-being of the newly-formed society. The one from the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke of the desirability of their having one day's rest in seven. The State church at that time was almost wholly on the side of wealth, so no one is surprised that the tail of it should have read: “The Archbishop regrets to find from your letter that in your judgment, according to present arrangements, railway servants are often kept too long at work, and that you think their wages are not always sufficient to save them from the temptation to be dishonest.” But of sympathy there is none. The Rev. G. M. Murphy, then a keen temperance worker, throwing the weight of his energy and effort into every good cause for the uplifting of Labour, was chairman. The reply from Bass had in it a little perky humour about their chairman: “It would have been a great pleasure to me

to have met your chairman, Mr. Murphy, on a platform where the interests of humanity and justice will form the topics of discussion, and where no difference could exist between us. He is an ardent and, I doubt not, a sincere advocate of temperance. So am I, and though perhaps appearances are against me on that score, I would beg him to believe that we only differ as to the means. I would do my utmost to destroy intemperance in every shape." He thought he could best serve them by assuming an independent position. The "Daily News" had a good leader on the meeting, in which it said: "Pounds, shillings, and pence were the trinity of railway worship; the pence being the chief portion, paid to those who laboured so hard to obtain for the employers the pounds and shillings." Of the London meeting five days before, the "Daily Telegraph" was even more strong, London having had meeting after meeting confined to the separate lines.

These two meetings were followed by another at the Albion Tavern, York Road, King's Cross, North London, on December 16th, which was crowded out, and hundreds were unable to obtain admission. The chair was taken by Vincent, who announced that Mr. Bass had offered 200 guineas towards the establishment of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, and a further 500 guineas towards the erection of a grand railway institute in which meetings might be held. Chapman was also present and spoke.

London now ablaze went ahead with meetings. But here commenced the struggle between the "two Richmonds in the field," and which at one time looked as if it would wreck the society. Vincent had the notion always that he should be the head of everything, that he and he alone was the capable guiding hand, and finding Chapman hailed everywhere as the recognised officer of the society, felt that events were slipping out of his hands. So far Chapman had confined himself to London and a short distance from it, because there were no funds to allow him to extend. Vincent, having the deep, ready purse of Bass to dip into, was able to get about into the provinces. But for him, the unfortunate part of it was, that outside London no society was formed, and his work for Bass required him in the provinces, so that he could only occasionally come to London, and whilst away events were the more decidedly going out of his way. He lacked initiative and driving force. The only thing he could do was to help, keep before railwaymen his previous efforts, and wait upon chance. The result of it all was that Chapman had London with him, with the exception of a part of Nine Elms and Battersea and all Brick Lane, which were with Vincent. That Vincent was a good speaker all records show. For a man to hold an audience for a three-hour speech, such as Vincent made at Brick Lane, marks him out as having speaking ability, with interesting forms and facts to give life, colour, and interest to it.

The London men, the leaders of that time, were quite cognisant of what Vincent had done; indeed, C. Shrikes, who was called at

that time "the Wise Man from the East," was one of Vincent's old society members, and was an active opponent. In the society which came to grief in 1867, of which Vincent was Secretary, at the delegate meeting in that year held at the Castle and Falcon Inn, Snow Hill, Birmingham, lasting a week, Shrikes was a London delegate, and the company he worked for refused him leave. His branch wished him to go, whatever the consequences, and the congress itself sent telegrams asking for his release, and the meeting eventually decided that he must not act in opposition to the company. Soon after, that society, with the other, fell to pieces. But the vanity of Vincent was not sufficient for the railwaymen of London to take to him, but recognising past work and to quiet the malcontents of the Battersea Branch, of which Whitmore was the chief, they made Vincent the first President of the newly-formed society at a meeting at the General Moore, Stewarts Lane, Battersea, in the following terms: "That Charles B. Vincent become the first President of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants." That this was intended as a solatium to Vincent and to keep his supporters quiet was shown at a meeting held on the 30th December 1871. The London men having tried to get Bass as President and failed, they elected Vincent on December 27th as President, the same day as they received from Bass a reply declining to accept. Bass wrote:—

"Rangemoor, Burton-on-Trent,

"December 27th, 1871.

"Dear Sir,—It would be a real pleasure to me to accept the office of President of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, and I feel very grateful for the offer of such a mark of their confidence, but after the best consideration I could give to the subject I have come to the conclusion that I may be of more service to the society by preserving a perfectly independent position. You may feel perfectly sure that in that quality I shall neglect no opportunity of doing all that is possible for me to promote the best interests of the society.

"M. T. BASS.

"Mr. George Chapman."

At the meeting held at the Winchester Arms on Sunday, December 30th, 1871, Chapman being chairman, this announcement was made, and that on the Thursday previous Chapman had been elected Secretary and Vincent as President. On the South-Eastern section of the union Chapman was hailed as the one man, and at New Cross they were especially enthusiastic, and all the meetings at that time closed with thanks to him and Bass.

Up to then Wales had been comparatively quiet, but the Taff Vale men had presented a memorial for the reduction of hours from sixty to fifty-four. A meeting was held at Neath, where the same programme was assented to, only included in that programme was a plea for weekly payments and the abolition of fines. A meeting was also held of the guards, brakesmen, porters,

policemen, and other workers on the Merthyr, Tredegar, and Abergavenny section of the L. & N. W. for a reduction of hours and increases of wages, and they presented a memorial to Mr. Bishop. The G. W. men held a meeting, and presented a memorial on nearly the same lines.

During 1871, though branches were formed of railwaymen, not a branch had given, so far as I can trace, the name of the A.S.R.S., save London, to the little bands that had gathered together, but so soon as 1872 dawned they came to recognise it, and with it came gathering strife.

On Friday, December 29th, 1871, a deputation of the goods guards of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, with delegates from Wakefield, Salford, Manchester, Mirfield, Liverpool, Bury, and Bolton, waited upon Mr. Thorley, the goods traffic manager of the company, at the Victoria Station respecting the memorial presented to the directors on November 17th asking for ten hours to be the limit of the working day; that all work beyond that to be paid at the rate of eight hours per day; Sunday, time and a-half, with increase of 2s. 6d. per week. Mr. Thorley stated that the directors had come to the decision to fix the ordinary working hours at twelve a day, and all extra hours were to be taken in the form of holiday at the convenience of the company, and that any time lost on account of sickness, if vouched for by a medical certificate, would not be deducted. "They were also willing to grant an advance of 1s. per week upon the present scale of 30s. per week, the maximum to be paid after seven years' service." They resolved to insist upon their demands, and made arrangements for giving fourteen days' notice if not complied with. The enginemmen also having made demands, which had been rejected, met on Sunday, the 7th, and others met the same day at other places to determine their future course of action, and all determined to discontinue work on January 13th, 1872. On Monday afternoon of the next day eleven delegates waited upon Mr. Thorley for the purpose of informing him of the resignation of 400 drivers, firemen, and guards, if they could not arrive at an understanding. He promised that he would recommend to the directors, who met on the 17th: "For goods guards, the first year after appointment, 23s.; second year, 25s., remaining at 25s. till they took charge of a train, when the wages would be 27s. for twelve months, then 28s.; entering the seventh year, 30s.; sixty hours to constitute a week's work, ten hours a day; overtime, time and a-half for Sunday work. Should Saturday's work be extended beyond midnight, this to be included in the week's work." The men determined to accept no compromise. The majority, however, decided they would await the meeting of the directors. The directors compromised on the guards' questions, and the men accepted. A later page will deal with the enginemmen. The directors of the G. N. also made a compromise with a section of their workers after a deputation had waited upon them, reducing the hours by one instead of

the two asked for. Shunters, who asked for 2s. per week, received 1s., and other grades with less than three years' service the same. Shrives, one of the deputation, said he was sure that all who went on that deputation must have felt how courteously they were treated by Mr. Oakley and his colleagues. The North-Eastern men were also presenting petitions.

The organising work of the society was still going on apace in London, and a meeting of all grades was held at the Commercial Hotel, Martin Street, Stratford, for the purpose of considering the objects of the A.S.R.S. A deputation from the society attended and explained its objects, and all such as were not previously members were enrolled. The meeting was unanimously in favour of the society and its programme, and made provision for delegates to attend at the forthcoming delegate meeting. This was on January 27th, and is the first intimation of a delegate meeting. On January 28th a meeting was held at the Montpelier Arms, Walworth, which was a landmark in the newly-formed society. It was the advent of Dr. Baxter Langley as chairman, and from that time London was swept as with a whirlwind. A dominating personality, eloquent in speech, resourceful and far-seeing, he became for a long while the most outstanding personality that had helped the struggling London society. Chapman was present as a speaker. Here for the first time the question of the registration of the society was mooted. A porter asked if the society was to be registered under the Act. He said if that was done hundreds would join it, because the funds would then be safe. It was resolved that the Council should be asked to have the society at once registered. The membership up to the time of the Stewart's Lane meeting was only 300, but more rapid strides set in directly after. One of the rules that was asked to be registered reads quaintly now, and which met with "warm approval": "Any member going on duty in a state of intoxication, or becoming so whilst in the discharge of his duty, shall, if reported to the society, be fined in any sum not exceeding 20s. and be deprived of all benefits from the society for any period not exceeding three months. Any member convicted of felony, perjury, or embezzlement by a magistrate or a jury of his county shall be expelled the society and forfeit all benefits therein." Thus it can be seen that the society was not to be a refuge of the drunkard, thief, or perjurer—if it was known. All the bills for a time had on them Chapman as Secretary and Vincent as President.

Chapter IV.

TROUBLE.

VINCENT, in addition to the detective work that he did for Bass, suggested to him the advantage of having a paper in the interests of railwaymen. Bass considered the idea and agreed. The growing organisation showed the possibility of having a strong national society, and as an adjunct to organisation the paper would be of material value. After due consideration Bass sent Vincent the following letter:—

“Rangemoor,

“December 9th, 1871.

“Mr. Bass is prepared to assist Messrs. C. B. Vincent and E. Phillips to publish a weekly journal to advocate the interests of railway servants. Mr. Bass is inclined to find the requisite funds for a three months' trial. Messrs. Vincent and Phillips estimate the weekly expenses at £31 7s. for printing, editing, conducting, and managing, all told. He (Mr. Bass) would recommend that the expenses of the first week should be liquidated during the second week, and the expenses of the second week should be paid in the third, and so on, to the end that not more than the expenses of one inter-week shall ever be unpaid.

“The receipts of the paper shall be accounted for weekly by Messrs. Vincent and Phillips to Mr. Bass, and paid to him, unless he shall arrange that they be taken in reduction of the weekly expenses. Messrs. Vincent and Phillips undertake to enter into such legal obligations as Mr. Bass may be advised to require. Mr. J. H. Brewer, a Master of Chambers in the Queen's Bench, will direct what may be required in the legal securities.”

This preliminary plan having been agreed to, the following notice was then issued:—

“On Saturday, the 6th of January, 1872, will appear the first number of the ‘Railway Service Gazette,’ a first-class weekly journal especially devoted to the interests of the railway officials of the United Kingdom, conducted by Charles Bassett Vincent. Give your orders at once.”

There will be many occasions to show Vincent as others see him and as history reveals him, so that he ought at this stage to give his own version of the events, which came thick and fast. The first six months of the year 1872 Vincent quite plainly wanted the leading place in the new organisation, whilst all the experience of him shows that of himself, by himself, he was a reed shaken with the

wind, was lethargic and inefficient. But he was ambitious, with some of the qualities that ensure the fulfilment of ambition. He had to lean upon others when he ought to have done things himself. He took Greenwood with him to write up the descriptive articles for the "Daily Telegraph," when, had he done it himself, with less descriptive imagery and less literary skill, he might have lifted himself into a higher niche of fame. He was a dilettante, sluggish in temperament, as in action. His brain was a hive of plans, few ever matured, unless someone came to his aid and matured them. The "Gazette" did not appear at the advertised date. The reason of it is plain. He was out to seize greater spoils, and this had to wait. Vincent here speaks for himself :—

"In the midst of all the anxiety attending the launching of a newspaper and other business, more anxieties presented themselves besides. London was alive in the railway world, and with the prospect of a large national union springing up it became a party question as to leadership with certain sections, 'and there was a division among them.' My policy was to work steadily on until there could be a meeting of the delegates from all parts, that should elect their chief officer, and that meanwhile all the appointments should be nominal. But my ways were not the ways of some of the others."

Here you have the secret of the delay in the issue of the "Gazette." To be cribbed, cabined, and confined in a newspaper office meant overshadowing his personality. He wanted to be out and about, to place himself in the limelight, thus having at least equal chances when the final choice of leader was made. The divisions he speaks of were due to himself, the pushing of his own claims, making the union aims secondary. He had an advantage that Chapman had not. Chapman had no funds; he had even to draw upon his own savings to indulge in propaganda, because the first balance sheet shows that the union owed Chapman £62 10s., and later Langley also loaned the union £200, when the disastrous strike took place at Broad Street and nearly wrecked the infant organisation, whilst Vincent had Bass to draw upon, and, to use John Graham's words, "was in clover." The provisional Executive had enormous difficulties to contend with. They were London men exclusively, and the provinces gave no aid in work, counsel, or finance, instead of which they were a drag upon effort, because they criticised when they should have worked. The provisional Executive saw the danger that lay about them and did their level best to avoid it. Chapman was equally anxious with Vincent to seize office, and both did the best for themselves. The Executive was more anxious for the union than for either. They knew the good work that Vincent had done and knew the effect this would have upon the minds of those who had worked with him, so they suggested that these two should settle their differences and think of the union apart from themselves. They instructed Chapman to see Vincent and

come to an understanding with regard to the matter, and Chapman, grudgingly because distasteful to him, wrote the following:—

“75, Orchard Street, Plumstead, S.E.,

“December 18th, 1871, 4 p.m.

“C. B. Vincent, Esq.

“Dear Sir,—Last night I was requested to write you and solicit you to visit me, so that we could talk matters over. I promised the members I would do so. May I therefore be permitted to invite you to run down and see me on Wednesday evening, and then we can exchange views.

“Faithfully and sincerely yours,

“GEORGE CHAPMAN, Secretary, A.S.R.S.”

The word “Secretary” is underlined and has not the prefix “pro tem,” which it ought to have had. Chapman’s ideas on the matter may be seen in a letter written to one who had been a member of the old society, and was a member of this society. The letter itself is an indication that money, even for stationery, was not too plentiful, because it is written, the first part of it, on both sides of a blue foolscap, and the second part on a half-sheet of white foolscap. (See Appendix A.) The rules had been sent, and Chapman was dunning for money, and letters from Graham in connection with it show that Graham was taking sides with those who were refusing to pay for the rules sent, and trying to outwit Chapman:—

A letter from Graham, ante-dated of Chapman’s letter, shows what had preceded. (See Appendix B.)

These two letters, with others that might be furnished, are sufficient to show what was going on and reveal the mentality of Chapman.

Again let Vincent tell his own story: “The strongest of unions have sometimes been restored and remodelled from old defects and failings, and the A.S.R.S. may be reckoned among the number; and the fact of its having waded through the troubled waters of discord and opposition on to firm and solid ground should be an incentive to all classes to be as one in the march before them. But to return. My engagements were increasing, and I was much wanted in the provinces, but matters had arrived at such a stage in London as to render it necessary for me to prolong my stay; for I wished particularly to make every arrangement, both with regard to the proposed society and newspaper satisfactory before going again into the country, where my engagements would last a long time. Mr. Bass was also very desirous of helping forward both these projects. With regard to the society, a strong committee of railwaymen was formed at Battersea, which issued a handbill announcing a meeting to be held at the General Moore, Stewart’s Lane, Battersea, on Thursday, December 28th, 1871, for the purpose of enrolling members.” One of this

committee was Sampson, a splendid fellow. The reader will have observed what Chapman says of that meeting:—

“ ‘A few days before, I presided over a meeting at the Albion, York Road, King’s Cross, which, as the papers stated, was so crowded that hundreds were unable to obtain admission. Mr. Chapman was also present, and the meeting was one of the most enthusiastic of any that I had attended, and resolutions were passed in favour of general combination.’ ”

“ ‘On the 26th of December I received the following:—

“ ‘Central Press Office.

“ ‘Dear Vincent,—Mr. Bass writes to say that he must see the leading contents. I have got them all, but they want setting up in type. Mr. Bass also wishes to see us both at Rangemoor some day this week. Saturday is the only day I could get off. Would that suit you? I went to the meeting at New Cross and made a short report of it for to-day’s “Telegraph.” I will tell you the particulars when I see you. It is essential that the printers and papermakers should be seen to.

“ ‘Yours faithfully,

“ ‘EDWIN PHILLIPS.’ ”

“ ‘The next day Mr. Bass wrote:—

“ ‘Rangemoor, Burton-on-Trent,

“ ‘December 27th, 1871.

“ ‘Mr. C. B. Vincent.

“ ‘Dear Sir,—Friday next, at Burton, at half past one, will, I think, suit me. If I am prevented from going to Burton I will order a carriage to bring you and Mr. Phillips here by half-past four. My friend Mr. Cecil Raikes, M.P. for Chester, is anxious you should meet him at Chester on the 17th January, when he has an appointment with the railway servants. Will you be so good as to address him at the Carlton Club, Pall Mall, and say if you can meet him at Chester on the 17th of January?

“ ‘Yours truly,

“ ‘M. T. BASS.’ ”

Assuming that Vincent kept his appointment on the 27th of December with Bass and Phillips, he hurried back with a view to the Battersea meeting, which turned him down as Secretary, but let him down lightly by making him President.

He continues: “ ‘The meeting at the General Moore was a very important one. The large club-room was crowded with men who had already joined and those who wished to join the ranks of unity. I was requested to address those present on the benefits which would arise from it, and I did so, and again advised all sections to become members of the society, which ere long would take a definite shape with a settled name, and I said I should be very pleased to see one great amalgamation. Several

speakers followed, and at the conclusion of some excellent addresses it was resolved 'That Charles B. Vincent become President of the society.'"

This paragraph is quite in accordance with Vincent keeping Vincent to the front, but Chapman's letter above shows the other side of the shield. It also shows another phase. Vincent never considered the society had taken "a definite shape with a settled name" till the first delegate meeting. After a description of the Chester meeting, Greenwood accompanying him—

"Left Chester for Birkenhead and Liverpool, gathering together members in unity and preparing them for the General Delegate Meeting, when everything would be properly arranged and defined. I also visited several important districts in the neighbourhood, and was about to proceed to Manchester when I was suddenly summoned to London on matters of greatest importance."

Not by the Executive, who knew him, and the intriguing that he was then indulging in. They would rather have had him stay in the provinces and they be getting on with their work, as he always promoted discord when he came.

"My stay in the provinces was of short duration in consequence of the sudden summons to London. Upon arriving in the Metropolis an interview took place between one of Mr. Bass's managers and myself with regard to the proposed newspaper. From the important events then occurring it was considered impossible for me to conduct the paper and float the society too, and it was arranged that I should be left free to assist the railwaymen to combine, while the paper could be managed by these two gentlemen, with such assistance as I might be able to render. While this was in process a departure from the ordinary mode of procedure occurred, promising unpleasantness, especially at a time when the soundest unity was needed. A small handbill was issued calling attention to 'an adjourned meeting to be held at the Montepelier, Walworth Road, on Sunday, January 28th, 1872, to advance the ten-hour movement, payment for overtime, diminution of Sunday duty, and weekly payment of wages. Chair to be taken at 7 o'clock precisely by J. B. Langley, Esq., LL.D.—George Chapman, General Secretary. Address (for the present), 75, Orchard Road, Plumstead. Please inform your mates and solicit them to attend. The 'Railway Service Gazette' will be ready on Saturday, February 3rd. Price, one penny.'

"Such was the substance of the unauthorised bills scattered broadcast in those days when the excitement in the railway world was something immense and when unanimity of purpose should have been the order of the day. It was impossible, however, to reconcile country and town men over the matter, and at the meeting strong opinions were expressed on both sides as to the introduction of persons into the movement who were inexperienced in railway work and outside its sphere of labour altogether. I could not help myself. My advice

was peace and perseverance, and join anyhow, so long as they did join, and that one day all would be settled and made clear, and with such friendly counsel I again left for the provinces to keep several important engagements, the first of them being Manchester. My abode for the time was at the Steam Engine, Ardwick, and there came a bundle of 5,000 copies to be going on with. This medium of correspondence was a joyous welcome—a want much felt and desired. It opened out a channel into which might flow the ideas and sentiments of a pent-up section of society of the most important order, such a section as the world cannot do without, and also a section as nowadays would be miserable without its paper. For railwaymen to be without their paper would be like being without their society, and yet the pity is there are proportionately so few readers of the one and so few members of the other.”

It is rather amusing for Vincent to be unable “to help himself” owing to the coming on the scene of Langley. Vincent afterwards attended Chester, Hereford, and Halifax. He goes on: “While I was busily engaged, chiefly in the provinces, the leaders in London were also extremely busy. While I was at Halifax an immensely enthusiastic meeting was held at the Commercial Hotel, Stratford. A large number of men enrolled themselves as members, and at several places round about London branches were added. There was nothing very particular in this, as there was no organised plan of action between the party in London, who were anxious of co-operating with their provincial brethren in carrying on and carrying out the work of reform, and because of this division progress was very much hampered. Mr. Chapman, in his letter to me, announced himself as General Secretary, when really no General Secretary existed. There was no alternative, therefore, but to work on as though there was nothing very particular the matter until the great meeting was held. I remembered only too well the dissension at Birmingham years before, and dreaded lest the companies should get to know there were internal bickerings among men professing to be steadfast and true. Several letters came from various quarters, in which were expressed strong opinions concerning the actions of the London leaders.”

This opinion of Vincent’s, that no society existed till such time as the general meeting took place, needs little comment, save to say there must be some semblance of organisation in order to have effectually sent delegates to the first Congress. It also accounts for the very strong passages of the provisional E.C., who were unduly anxious that they and the provinces should be one. It is implied in the title they gave it, and everywhere they tried to do their best to get them to fall into line. Vincent refused to answer the letters that were addressed to him, acted off his “own bat,” derided them, defied them, insulted them, till such time as their ideas had obtained sway, and then came fawning to them, and when they took pity on him in recognition of what he had done, not because of what he could

be to them, he repaid their kindness by ingratitude, till at last they expelled him from the society.

“The London party, however, was very determined, and most persistently persevered in carrying the sway. Until such time as a National Union had been made, the more orderly course would have been for the Secretary to have consulted the President as to the arrangement of official meetings, but instead of which (though I was addressed as President, as I have letters in Mr. Chapman’s handwriting to show) matters were carried as though no such person existed, and a meeting of the Executive Council of the Amalgamated Society was held at the Winchester Arms, Southwark Street, London, on Tuesday, February 22nd, 1872, for the purpose of electing three Trustees, to receive the report of John Thomas Moss, solicitor, as to the registration of the rules, and to receive the report as to the consent of Vice-Presidents. Dr. Baxter Langley was to have presided, but he failed to be present in time, and Mr. Moss took the chair. Mr. Chapman, ‘General Secretary,’ read the minutes of a previous meeting, which were approved, and Mr. Moss said the first business was to elect Trustees, and they were elected. The Chairman then stated that he had written to several gentlemen in sympathy with the railway servants and their agitation asking them whether they would allow their names to appear in the rule books as Vice-Presidents, and he had received replies from three. Mr. Bass declined such an office. Mr. Moss then proceeded to point out the necessity of completing the rules, and to meet any emergency that might arise when the Secretary was not at hand to insert a rule empowering any member of the society to inspect the books whenever it might be deemed advisable, and which, he said, was required by law. Someone suggested that Mr. Moss should be elected a Vice-President, but he said he could not serve so well as a lawyer if he accepted any office, as he was so intimately connected with railway companies. Objections were made to some of the rules, which were amended; and Mr. Chapman stated that the chief offices of the society would be at 308, New Cross Road, to which all communications should be addressed. It was decided that some amount should be give to Mr. Chapman to help him pay the expenses of the offices.

“These meetings appear orderly enough to the uninformed, and new members were made in London by scores and hundreds, and who, when they were connected with the association, took sides with their party, of course, in condemning the conduct of the countrymen because they would not tolerate such actions as were being carried on by a few—and only a few—who were certainly for a time having it all their own way. Strange that with one or two exceptions, these Metropolitans so anxious for power are all removed from the scene.* Those remaining were friends of the best kind. They were at that time neither fluent of speech nor powerful in the art of

* This was written in 1884.

agitation; but they were good unionists, and in due time became strongly attached to the existing Government. There were others who, after they had joined for a time, retired again because they could not consistently act with the party then exercising supreme rule. Many of the rules of this section were objectionable in a national sense, and the whole transaction considered premature, if not presumptuous. The great delegate meeting did not take place until June, 1872, and yet the society had its names and rules months beforehand. Had either the prefix 'proposed' it would have smoothed away the rough edges of dissent; but it was not so, and the greatest difficulty was to maintain anything like quietness, and quite impossible to maintain peace."

The official side of these charges will all come up in due time, but the whole position cannot be understood unless we have the Vincent view of matters. The only point that Vincent makes here is the prefix "suggested" or "pro tem," but as it appears to me, from this position, looking forward, the trouble was undue development of the personal ego. That he was not consulted as President, it has to be considered that it was an utter impossibility. The leaders were too busy to pay attention to him, only for his misdeeds. The marvel to me, as I have run through the documents of that period, is that they did so much work, and did it so well. Vincent was out of it; he saw it, felt it, and he made their road as rugged as he could. "Mr. Bass was perplexed, and would not express his opinion in favour of either party, and said that if a split did really happen he would 'wash his hands' of the whole matter. Upon it becoming known that Dr. Baxter Langley had been made Chairman of the London Executive Committee numerous were the inquiries concerning him, for besides having presided at a meeting of railway servants at Walworth, comparatively few knew him in the Metropolis, and his name was altogether strange to those in the provinces. I was at Newcastle when the 'Gazette' was put into my hands announcing that gentleman's election to the Chairmanship of the new association. In answer to the various queries I could but say that I had been told that Dr. Langley was a friend of the working classes and very desirous of doing them good; but as to proceedings attending his election neither myself nor any of the bodies formed in the country knew anything, and a great deal of curiosity was evinced."

We must now go back a little to the L. & Y. enginemen's agitation, the enginemen that we dropped in the last chapter. They held a meeting at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, on February 3rd, which comprised delegates from every engine station upon the L. & Y. It was decided to re-memorialisise the directors for an agreement, made in 1867, to be carried out in its entirety, giving the ten-hour day with eight hours for overtime; also that every man's time should commence when he signed himself on duty. The overtures made by the men were unsuccessful, and a strike was threatened. The men met at the British Fleet, Salford, when delegates came from Bury, Wigan, Miles

Platting, Wakefield, Bolton, Blackburn, Accrington, and other places to consider what steps should be taken to enforce the general demand for a reduction of hours from twelve and a-half to ten per day, to obtain an increase of wages, and to remedy the general grievances set forth in the memorial drawn up at the Free Trade Hall meeting. The chairman and delegates complained that they had been "most courteously and abominably (*sic*) treated by the superintendent of the East Lancashire since presenting the memorial; that he had plainly threatened to make matters worse for them if they expressed further dissatisfaction; and that, therefore, they were determined to a man, from the youngest to the oldest, to the very bitter end and to the collar of their coats to fight for their just rights as conceded by their agreement of 1867, which had been violated. They decided to take no further notice of their superintendent, but to wait upon Mr. Lawn, and if he refused them justice, to take measures which would compel them to grant their request to the letter." So they drew up a further memorial, which was signed by 600 men, and a deputation of twenty was appointed to wait upon Mr. Lawn and present the memorial with a letter of complaint against Mr. Hurst, of the Lancashire and Yorkshire section, and Mr. Jacques, of the East Lancashire section. The clerks also and the stationmasters were agitating for better conditions. The result of all, however, was meagre. Newcastle, Glasgow, and other places were agitating. London, however, with several meetings a night, and with Chapman working eighteen hours a day, was both agitating and making firm the foundations of the new society and making preparation for the first Congress, called by everybody in anticipation the "Great Delegate Meeting." London wanted it, the provinces wanted it, but the provinces made no preparations for it. London did. London wanted it to complete the work it had begun, the provinces to overthrow the London section altogether. When Greek meets Greek, etc. From the time of Langley's advent a new turn came into affairs. He was shrewd and farseeing, and he never cared for London or provinces; he was for the union, and twice, as we shall see, by a dramatic strike threw his weight into the provincial scale, and they triumphed.

The "Gazette," so far from being an aid to the society, was, for the first three months of its existence, one of the greatest dangers the union had. In its first issue it had an advertisement: "Edwin Phillips, Electric Instrument Manufacturer, Quarenden Road, near Derby. Orders by post promptly attended to." So it would seem that Phillips left electrical work and took to journalism. Its second issue had this: "We are happy to announce that the prospects of the society are improving day by day, and that from all parts of England we are in constant receipt of letters from men who are anxious to become members, or, having joined, are solicitous to impress on their fellow servants the importance of at once enlisting. To this we would earnestly add our persuasion. Railway servants

may rely that the good ship will enable them to ride through the troubled waters that environ them. Such a vessel will bear unscathed any amount of tempest-tossing, whereas if the body of railway servants is split up into divisions each one will represent the little boat that a big wave may upset at any time. The good ship is named 'Fellowship,' and worked by a reliable crew, there will be little fear of her coming to grief."

Manchester had then a branch, also Ardwick, Paddington, Halifax, Stratford, and Birmingham (and these were amongst the most active), whilst Accrington was trying to form one. Manchester had then the largest branch, and Stratford came second. In February, for the first time, Chapman was in the Midlands, where he announced that Bass promised to give 300 guineas to the society that it might be established, and a further contribution to the funds when the society was formed. A little later Langley attended a meeting of 250 delegates at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, showing that London was coming in touch with the provinces, and the linking up had begun, which, but for the mischievous influence of the "Gazette" and Vincent, would have gone on. The date of the establishment of the society is given in Chapman's letter above as November 26th, 1871. In the application for registration the date is given as November 27th. On the rule book it is November 28th. The application for registration has the date February 9th, 1872, and the signatures on the application are: W. H. Baker, G. Godden, C. Costello, Henry Lacey Smith, G. Harnet, John Mills, Jesse Harmsworth, and Moss (Solicitor), Gracechurch Street, London, E.C. The registration date is March 2nd, 1872. On February 22nd the Executive met at the Winchester Arms and elected three Trustees, C. Allsopp, H. J. Rivett, and Job Elliott. Douglas Straight, M.P., consented to become a Vice-President and sent five guineas. Samuel Morley also consented to be a Vice-President.

In the meantime the London men were making strenuous efforts to have the first general meeting for the first Monday in June, but with the great amount of details, coupled with the inability to raise funds, it could not take place on that date. On March 9th, 1872, the "Gazette" came out with this: "The Great Delegate Meeting. The consciousness that we are treading on dangerous ground does not deter us from repeating the question that in a score of letters we are asked every day: 'When is the Great Delegate Meeting to take place?' The meeting at which shall be satisfactorily decided much which gravely concerns the advancement and the firm establishment of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. Let it be distinctly understood that there is no falling off in the desire to strengthen and complete among themselves this mighty bond of union. Within the past six weeks it has gained more power than many a hundred societies attain during six months. All depends on the basis. On it will have to be raised an edifice—who shall say of what prodigious weight and proportions—and it is impossible to take too great precautions before, in a manner of speaking, the first row

of bricks that are laid. Who are the architects? What are the plans? In other words, who are the officers of the society that may grow to be one of the largest, if not the largest, in England, and what are their plans? Are the said officers already elected? There are certain energetic and honourable men who will reply to the question in the affirmative and exhibit surprise that it should at this stage of the society's existence be asked. But it is not we who ask it; it is asked, we repeat, by hundreds of our correspondents, living away from London, who are evidently honest in their declaration that they were unaware of the election of the society's superior officer, and request to know when and where the election took place and by what percentage of the numerous body of railway servants the same was accepted and ratified. They express no objection to the gentlemen who are put forth as already having possession of the helm, but they urge that they have an equal right, with their brethren in London, to a voice in the selection of those on whose shoulders on their behalf such heavy responsibility rests. They persist that in appointing themselves a chief they should have the privilege of making it a matter of general election, of which the ballot box presents no simpler, safer, or fairer test."

Greenwood was the Editor. He was an intimate friend of Vincent, as it was due to Vincent that he was engaged to write the "Daily Telegraph" articles and run the "Gazette." Bass also was wishful, and expressed it to Vincent, that he (Vincent) should have a permanent place in the society. It is also plain that Bass did not like Langley, who was an advanced Radical and in favour of Home Rule, when then the Liberals had not declared for it, and did not till thirteen years after. Bass, generous soul that he was, was one of the old-fashioned Whigs. There you have the setting of this quarrel.

In the same issue we have this, in itself a sidelight: "Mr. Charles B. Vincent sends us the following notes of travel for the past week, which contrast strangely with the accounts of progress and reform that have of late met the public eye through official sources: 'Large meetings have taken place at Huddersfield, Halifax, Ardsley, Wakefield, Doncaster, and Barnsley, and hundreds of men are joining the A.S.R.S., showing that there is a downright earnestness on the part of the railway workers to be up and doing.'" One cannot but think that their complaining correspondents were mythical. The next issue they reply to James Bowley, of whom there will be occasion to speak later: "It is to be hoped that the prevailing uncertainty as regards the important matter you write of will not be of much longer duration." At the same time Vincent's address was being published in large type on the leader page, and ran on till Graham came forward as one of the officials of the society, but Graham had to pay for his as an advertisement in small type among other advertisements. All the indications were that but for the "Gazette" things would have righted themselves. It was Vincent, and he only, that was the disturbing factor. The paper backed its friend, and cared

more for him than the organisation. What the other side sent—important matters—were not inserted. They played with loaded dice; so much so that the “Beehive” had to be used as a means of communication whilst they had an organ professedly their own.

In all the meetings at that time Langley showed the clear, piercing vision, the broad outlook, the eloquent tongue, and was more concerned with making the union strong than with any question of personalities. At one meeting he urged that the first step to success was to become united among themselves. He “had no doubt that if this was made the basis of their action they would soon obtain a reduction of their working hours. There was a difficulty in getting men to state their grievances, but it must be done before any effective action could be taken. He wanted them to consider the question not alone on their case, but that of the railway servants all over the country. The society had long contemplated making ten hours a day (six days a week) one of its aims. The Executive of the society of which he was Chairman, was appointed, and they had proposed to hold a delegate meeting in June, which, considering the extent of the railway world, would probably be one of the most influential meetings of the kind ever held in the world. Railwaymen were above the average intelligence, and he would venture to say that if they combined together they would have a union far exceeding any other in interest and existence. They must act as brothers, man to man, and combine all branches of the service.” He so far urged this that the Carmen and Conveyancing Union, which had sprung up at the same time as the A.S.R.S., and of which Shrivess was secretary and Canon Jenkins president, should merge into that, though the two worked amicably together. So also in the middle of April, at the Council, which had been elected by the London Branches, he read the correspondence that had taken place between himself, Greenwood, Bladen, of Birmingham, and others, all with an effort to bring the men in close contact with each other with reference to a united programme, and he hoped that between his friends of the country and their provincial councils there would be a basis of continuity and connection, the union consolidated, and an end put to all the differences which had hitherto weakened their cause. And with regard to future proceedings he “expressed confidence that the London men would act with dignity and calmness, which should characterise a conference, would so act because in that assembly’s hands lay the destiny of railway servants throughout the kingdom. He also relied upon the good sense of the provincial delegates, who would be selected for their fitness to represent their fellows. He could not believe that any would allow petty jealousy to retard the progress of their cause. There had been mistakes of the Committee, but it was useless to waste time in reproaches. The great object was the consolidation of the union. To that they should bend all their energies and give of their means, brain, and labour to firmly establish and perpetuate their union, in which their present and future

salvation lay." None of the speeches of this kind appeared in the "Gazette." Still Vincent was stirring strife in the provinces, whilst in London they were trying to heal.

The London Executive were, of course, from the London branches. They were: King's Cross, H. J. Rivett, W. H. Baker, G. Laceby, J. Guninter; Battersea, Samuel Cooke, J. Askey, G. Woodina, J. Bargent, N. Teve, A. Hunt; Stratford, T. Christopher, J. Wells, Cleminson, Allsop; West End, W. Cornish, J. Elliott, S. Larkin, Walker, Kemp, Wheeler; South-Eastern, T. Irwin, W. Davies, A. Bone, J. Gadden, W. Grabbam, J. Penbury; Crystal Palace, W. Reeves, G. Mint, B. Brown, J. Page, Chalcraft, and Pearson. Even with this number some meetings had to be adjourned because a quorum could not be obtained.

Chapter V.

THE STORM BURSTS.

THE two difficulties that faced the youthful organisation at this period were intrigue and lack of money. Chapman wrote in all directions dunning the newly-formed branches for money, accentuated because of the two sections, London and provincial, being at variance. This is one of those sent out:—

“75, Orchard Street, Plumstead, London, S.E.,

“21st February, 1872.

“Dear Sir,—I am grateful to you for your very kind note of the 21st, and thank you for the same. You say thirty men gave their names if everything was satisfactory. I feel that every man will say so when I tell them that J. T. Moss, Esq., Solicitor, Gracechurch Street, London, went through the rules and said they were excellent. I am glad to state that one has just sent five guineas, another one guinea. I hope to-day to have more. We are among noble lords—M.P.’s, with Mr. Bass, M.P., for our chief patron—and what railway servant will say we are doing wrong? The Press and the public are on our side, and thank God the cry everywhere is ‘Come, come and we will appreciate.’ I go to Rugby for Sunday, and they want me at Crewe. Both Bristol, March, Newport, Swindon, Strood, Maidstone, Ashford, Nine Elms, Camden Town, Notting Hill, and nine other places next Sunday, so you can see we are going on well. If you will reply and put your questions in due form I will answer them as requested. If you resolve to form a branch elect twelve for your committee, and then elect a chairman, vice-chairman, three trustees, and a treasurer. This done, look out for a gentleman that can devote his time and attention as secretary to the branch, then you can bank your own money less the sum or sums as may be required when the equalisation of funds takes place throughout the branches. Again thanking you,

“I beg to remain ever faithfully yours,

“GEORGE CHAPMAN, General Secretary (A.S.R.S.).”

Six days later the letters had the printed heading of the title and the address of “Office: 308, New Cross Road.”

“27th February, 1872.

“Dear Sir,—Yours to hand, and for which I thank you. I am glad you have made a start. I have not a single copy of rules by me. The rules are in the hands of Mr. J. T. Moss,

Solicitor. He is looking through them to see if everything is fair and honest. I do not expect his reply till Saturday. The patrons of the society are D. Straight, Esq., M.P. (£5 5s.), S. Morley, Esq., M.P., and Mr. Bass, M.P., who is at the head of all; in fact, the very spirit of the movement. Now for your questions. (1) All rules will be sent from the General Office, then we shall know they are identical. (2) The rules will be amended as the society progresses (sic). I cannot say when the delegate meeting will take place. It will absorb all our attention. We supply Mr. Bass, M.P., with information for his Bill in Parliament. One thing Mr. Brabrook is going to peruse our rules and favour us with his opinion of them. I will send you cards and forms of application if you desire it. I should have called and seen you, but Mr. Bass begged me to travel on to Derby, and I did so, hence the cause of my not seeing you. I go away again on Saturday to Crewe. We address every new member by expressing the hope that he will do his best to attain the objects of the society without using any harsh measures. If you want the correspondence let me know.

“Faithfully yours,

“GEORGE CHAPMAN, General Secretary.”

“6th April, 1872.

“Dear Sir,—My thanks are due to your very kind note of yesterday. I am now very anxious to learn the number of members you have in your branch. I expect to meet Mr. Bass, M.P., and the Presidents on Tuesday, and they desire to know how we are going on. Please send me this information by return of post, so that I may have it on Monday morning. You say your Com. will meet on Sunday to consider the question of sending money to carry out the objects of the society. I may perhaps be allowed to state that the Treasurer and myself have paid many bills out of our own private purse. This we cannot be expected to do at all times, hence the reason for the Council taking action in the matter. I really think you are paying an exorbitant charge for your rooms. I fear the Council will not approve of it (see Rule 6, clause 2). Don't forget the society is *registered*. I am not unkind, far from it, but the Council will, I have no doubt, desire me to write you after the next meeting. Hoping to hear from you on Monday.

“Believe me, fathly yours,

“GEORGE CHAPMAN, General Secretary.

“P.O.O.'s to be made payable to Mr. George Chapman, 308, New Cross Road, at the Post Office, 393, New Cross Road.”

These letters are just as they are written, with punctuation, or lack of it, wrong spelling in cases, with the old form of writing an “f” when two “s's” come together, as in the name of “Bass,” and other cases. The present 308, New Cross Road, was

a branch of Farrow's Bank, but it is not the original 308, that place being taken by the Town Council of Deptford, and the Town Hall is built on the site.

This had been written on the 1st of April to the same individual:—

“Dear Sir,—The money I asked you to send was not to support me, it was to purchase other materials for opening branches throughout the country. I have not received a fraction for my services. I have not asked any money from the Council. I have paid money out of my own purse to keep the society going, and now I want 5,000 copies of rules, etc., for different parts of the country and who desire to open branches. The Council instructed me to make a demand of 1s. per head per member throughout the branches for the requirements of the society, amounting to £60. It is not very likely that we shall trouble you for six or twelve months. Now as regards my election as General Secretary. It took place before you were members. Again I tell you that I have never received a single penny for my services, which commenced last August. And now I will invite you to read Rule 7, lines 9 and 10.

“Faithfully yours,

“GEORGE CHAPMAN, General Secretary.”

This is from John Graham:—

“Derby, April 3rd, 1872.

“Dear Friend,—I must congratulate you on your success in pumping Chapman. He has told me he gets nothing by being Secretary, but when I was in London one of the London men showed me a letter which stated that the money was required to pay for office furniture and *for arrears of Secretary and Treasurer's salary*. So you see Chapman is a liar, for this letter says he was assistant secretary to the Amalgamated Engineers for seventeen or eighteen years. Mr. Bladen, of Birmingham, writing to the secretary of the Amalgamated Engineers, was informed in the reply that they (the engineers) knew nothing of him; and Mr. Fletcher, the ironfounders, of Derby, says the same thing, and yet Chapman says he was Mr. Fletcher's head man for a long time—many years. The provisional government is not yet formed, the meeting for this purpose takes place on Tuesday next. Until the provisional government is formed, Mr. Bass and the other gentlemen have nothing to do with the society—I mean in the way of governing it, but when it is formed they will be managers of the society both in name and essence, and this will mature with the general delegate meeting. ‘I am spotted at last.’ On Saturday Maxley informed me that I was to remove to Yate on the following Tuesday, but he could not say what my position would be. I go to Ward; and he tells me a third-class pointsmen's post. There would be nothing to do, and it was a splendid country. With this I go to Needham

and told him I could not think of going to a third-class post, having some time left a second-class one of my own free will. He tells me he had decided to promote me; I told him I could not accept it; it was an Irish promotion, if anything. Well, he supposed I would give my notice in; I said no, I had no wish to leave, but he was driving me to it. 'Well,' says Mr. N., 'we will state it this way: A condition of the service is that you remove when and where required. Will you go to Yate?' Answer: No. 'Well, at the end of a fortnight you leave the company's service.' Says I, 'Very good,' and withdrew. My time expires on Monday, the 25th. I have applied for leave for Tuesday, when the meeting takes place. Stick to your money, and don't let Chapman get the handling of a fraction. I forgot to say that I have lately been shifted to the booking office, and am now booking office bobby. The job is not much amiss—all day work and go home to meals. So the Yate affair has been decided upon very lately or I should not have had the booking office job. I write to Price, the chairman, to-morrow; that may cause a little bother and give Needham a waking up. Needham says he has no fault to find with me, but thinks I should be of more service to the company elsewhere. So he gives me this promotion. I can prove to Mr. P. that it is no promotion, and request him to give some other explanation.

"JOHN GRAHAM."

"Derby,

"April 7th, 1872.

"Dear Friend,—The answer to my application is that as I am under notice to leave they cannot think of granting me the required leave and passes. A report has got about here that they suspected me, and when I went to London Father Loveday followed me to see what I was up to. He found out, and I got the sack. That they know what I am I do not disbelieve; but I don't think for a moment that they would get at me in this manner. On Monday week, the 15th, my time is up; *you will hear more of me then*. Tuesday will be an eventful day for Chapman and for us.

"Yours, etc.,

"JOHN GRAHAM."

"Dear Friend,—I am not surprised to see Chapman still hanging on to you, and he will do, like a brick. I will say, as he says, that is, 'remember that the society is registered,' and if you once give him a hold on you you will not get rid of him when you would like to. I don't say don't pay him for what you have had, but I do say let it be a private transaction, *not* between the society and him, but *you* and him. Mr. Price has acknowledged my letter and will inquire into the matter. So I shall soon hear

from him again. I don't know how they got on in London yesterday, but expect a full account to-morrow. Till then, adieu.

"Yours most sincerely,

"JOHN GRAHAM.

"P.S.—I like the idea of Chapman finding fault with you for spending your own money. Never mind, don't let him have a fraction of it. If he gets very troublesome refer him to me, or to someone else, and if you find any difficulty in answering his letters you may send them to me and I will give him a satisfactory answer; or you may ignore them altogether and bother yourself no further. I do not hear of him pestering other places as he does you; if he did do it I imagine I should hear of it from some source or other. I gave Mr. Bladen, of Birmingham, an account of how Chapman was bothering you. It is not unlikely that this information was brought forward at the meeting. If it was, Chapman knows of it. If you have a letter from him respecting this you might, if you were disposed, keep up the deception a little longer; be ignorant of me and give as explanation that some traitor must have supplied me with the information.—J.G.

"April 10th, 1872."

"April 25th.

"Dear Friend,—I go to London on Saturday, but have arranged to meet the others at Rugby. I have just got a letter from Birmingham with a programme of the forthcoming delegate meeting, composed by Chapman and Co. He also tells me that he is not quite certain whether we shall meet at Rugby. I think under the circumstances the best thing to do would be to send me the letters—Chapman's, I mean, by the train that gets here at 1-10 p.m. Don't pay for it; I will do that. Above all things, I should like to have *all* Chapman's letters. I have carefully kept your letters, but what Chapman now wishes is so remarkable that if he denied writing so. But if I have it in his own writing I should nab him. I am glad you take the course you do with Chapman. Do not let him have anything to do with you. I believe he can come upon you for the rule books, etc., and will try to make it a transaction with the society; but don't let him. I believe there are twelve of us going to meet the Londoners, but I don't know who they are. Young, of Leeds, is one.

"Yours sincerely,

"JOHN GRAHAM."

You have here a most remarkable fact as showing the "Gazette" policy. This meeting referred to by Graham was a remarkable one, and was the first step to actively bring together the London and

provincial sections. The meeting was at the Winchester Arms, and had been convened at the request of Bass, who was anxious to make for smooth running. The twelve provincial delegates were faced at this meeting with a much superior number of the Londoners, and Langley, as he had all along, was trying might and main to bring the two together. He suggested to the London men that they should meet the provincials with an equal number, and, turning to the provincials, he assured them that the London men were ready, as in truth they were, to make any concession and to move with their friends in the provinces. It was his first dramatic stroke. We shall see another in the next chapter still more so. The Londoners could not well resist the appeal to their good nature, with a flattering description of themselves, and they readily agreed. He (Langley) next suggested that Mr. Graham, of Derby, whose good work was well known to him and them, should take the chair without any loss of voting power. Graham declined, and Langley was voted to the chair. The clauses in the proposed rules were discussed seriatim. Clause 1 was adopted unanimously. Clause 2 to read as follows: "That the Council and officers who have been elected pro tem. shall be accepted as a provisional government until the delegate meeting shall have been duly constituted and shall have elected other persons to perform the executive duties. That Mr. Graham, of Derby, be appointed to receive the monies contributed for the purpose of the conference from the county districts, except the metropolitan counties, and all district secretaries in the county are requested to forward their subscriptions for the conference to him. Mr. Graham to report to the Chairman of the E.C. in respect of such contributions." This amendment and addition was proposed and seconded by the London delegates, and carried unanimously. Clause 3 was altered as follows: "At the delegate meeting the future rules should be the first discussed, but to prevent loss of time no proposal or reference thereto should be entertained unless notice of such shall have been forwarded to the General Secretary (pro tem.) fourteen days before such delegate meeting, and every proposition shall be duly authenticated by a vote of the majority of branch sending, or as having been approved by at least ten members of the society where a delegate cannot be sent. Such districts, however, to send their levy to the conference to Mr. Graham, to remit their proposition through him to the London E.C."

In the course of this discussion Cordwell, of Manchester, gave an interesting report of the work going on in Manchester, and stated that with a view to obtaining the best possible code of rules they had a committee of experienced men working hard on the preparation of comprehensive rules based on the experience of other societies. Several of the London delegates expressed their gratification and their willingness to accept any effective body of rules so prepared. It was suggested, moreover, that it would probably save expense and trouble if instead of proposing independent rules the provincial

delegates would accept the Manchester rules as the basis of future rules. The amendment was adopted unanimously.

Clause 4 was unanimously agreed to be amended as follows: "Any branch having fifty members, or united branches making up that number, to send one representative; branches exceeding 250 to send two delegates; exceeding 300 to send three delegates, and no more. Delegates unexpectedly prevented from attending may place their credential in the hands of any other delegate."

Clause 5 was so amended that the credentials of the delegates in the metropolitan district were to be endorsed by Mr. Graham.

Clause 6 was altered so as to change the date of the commencement of the delegate meeting from June 1st to June 24th, which was unanimously agreed to.

In Clause 7 the word "revision" was altered to "consideration," with additional words added to the effect that the sitting of the conference on the first day should commence at 11 a.m.

Clause 8 was adopted with the exception of the last sentence referring to the election of the General Secretary, in reference to which it was decided that an advertisement should be published offering £250 a year to a gentleman qualified to undertake the duties; that applications should be submitted to a sub-committee, consisting of Mr. Giles (Chester), Cordwell (Manchester), Bladon (Birmingham), and three members of the E.C., who shall be empowered to reduce the number by selecting the six most eligible, whose names should be submitted by lists sent out to branches, through their officers, the gentleman receiving the most votes being elected for the ensuing year.

Clause 10 was amended to read as follows: "That with a view to securing a fair representation from all parts of the country, the expenses of such delegate be paid for by a levy of 1s. per member, to be paid into the hands of the parties authorised to receive the same, the General Secretary for the metropolitan districts, and Mr. Graham for the county districts, on or before the 10th of June. No member who has not paid his contribution shall be entitled to vote in the election of a delegate to the conference, and no branch which has not paid its levy to the delegates' expenses on or before the 10th of June shall be entitled to send a delegate. The allowance to each delegate to cover such time as may be necessary for him to come and return to the branch which he represents, such allowance to be at the rate of 12s. 6d. per day, with travelling expenses."

Clauses 11 and 12 were agreed to without any alteration.

This was a fine piece of constructive work, and to show how well they builded some of these findings as to expense remained unaltered to the war period of 1914.

To show how the Vincent spirit predominated, this was excluded from the "Gazette." That paper was just about to break out, as we shall see later. More and more it was being seen that the Vincent intrigues were breaking down, though not without even more danger

than this. But this was the culminating point, and the storm burst. But it had the effect that a thunderstorm has in the atmosphere, it cleared the air. Let the only living witness of that meeting speak. The letter is from John Graham, dated April 29th, 1872, with his usual postscript, and the date at the bottom of the letter:—

“Dear Friend,—We may safely congratulate ourselves upon the result of the Saturday’s meeting. It was very stormy at first, and for three hours we were considering Clause 2 in the proposed programme. It was distinctly stated that we could not in any way be under control of Mr. Chapman, nor would we have anything to do with him. We could allow the arrangements for the forthcoming delegate meeting, and should, therefore, require someone to take in hand all this. The result of it was, that I was appointed to receive all monies from the provinces. To me all propositions for rules, etc., are to be addressed. I shall have some copies of the amended programme, which will state clearly what my duties will be. I will send you some. The meeting concluded about midnight, and we all parted on the most friendly terms. The London men admit errors have been made by them and misstatements made by Mr. Chapman, but they wish bygones to be bygones, and will go hand in hand with us. All provincial delegates (twelve) were satisfied, *and there is now no division amongst us.* The Executive Council and Mr. Chapman will still govern the London men, and with them I shall have nothing to do. Dr. Baxter Langley was in the chair, and had it not been for him I am afraid we should not have parted as we did. *He proves himself to be a gentleman.* Chapman will acknowledge the receipt of the rules, etc., and I don’t think he will dare to say anything about the 1s. per head. If he does, it is not at the request of the London men on the Council. You will hear from me again in a day or two.

“P.S.—The delegate meeting takes place on June 24th and the two following days.”

Already John Graham’s prophecy was being fulfilled when he said “On Monday week my time is up; you will hear more of me then.” One of the mistakes of the London men, or rather the mistake of the Council, was in allowing Chapman’s name to go forth as Secretary without the “pro tem.”

The following is also from Graham, dated May 9th, 1872:—

“3, Grayling Street, Chadwicks Lane.

“Dear Friend,—You see I have taken my time in answering yours of the 6th, but I thought I would wait until the programmes came, and now they have not yet come. I shall have them before the week is out. The Manchester meeting was a great success, between 700 and 800 being present. There were any amount of speakers, and some of them very good indeed. Towards the close Vincent dropped in and was well received. Altogether

the meeting was very enthusiastic. I read a letter from Dr. Baxter Langley stating that what was stated in last week's 'Gazette' in the leading article was anything but the truth. I have had several letters from him; in fact, am still carrying on the correspondence. I believe he is one of the best men we have at present. Sheffield intends holding a meeting similar to the one at Manchester on the 26th inst. I am invited and shall go. On Sunday after the meeting I went to the Steam Engine at the Arwick Branch. Business was very brisk. Vincent went with me, or, rather, I went with him. He was called upon to address the meeting, as most of the members (M. S. & L. men) were absent from the Free Trade Hall. One of their guards had been killed during the week, and many had gone to the funeral. Vincent intends being a candidate for the General Secretary, so also do I. Last night I was presented with a nice sum of money (52s. 6d.), the result of a subscription among the Derby pointsmen, only to show the respect they have for me. This I consider very handsome indeed for the number of men, and also a very kind action on their part. You may guess who was the originator of it and who were at the trouble of collecting it. I can assure you I shall have a much better opinion of myself if I go on at this rate.

"Yours most sincerely,

"JOHN GRAHAM."

The phrase "towards the close Vincent dropped in" is one of conduct seen again later. Meanwhile Vincent is trusting to intrigue instead of making himself indispensable. The "Gazette" was being edited by Greenwood, with Phillips as his assistant, and it was advertised in its columns that on May 18th it would be placed entirely under Greenwood's control. Before the meeting alluded to above, to arrange the programme, April 27th, one was convened for March 26th, at the request of Bass. Langley, Chapman, and representative men from the provinces were invited to attend at his town residence to discuss the divisions which existed among them, and to see if a way could be found to heal them. Thomas Brassey, S. Morley, D. Straight (M.P.'s), Vincent, and delegates from Manchester, Derby, Birmingham, and others were present. Langley said, in brief, the aims they had were one society for all and immediate amelioration of the conditions of railwaymen. They had taken steps to legalise the society because it was a necessity. Their actions had been beneficial, and the results deserved praise, not censure. Bass inquired whether all the officers were appointed pro tem. and whether the arrangements generally were subject to revision. Langley replied certainly, and that he could not understand why any men of the country should not agree to the steps they had taken, seeing, as he had just pointed out, legality was imperatively demanded by the unsettled state of affairs.

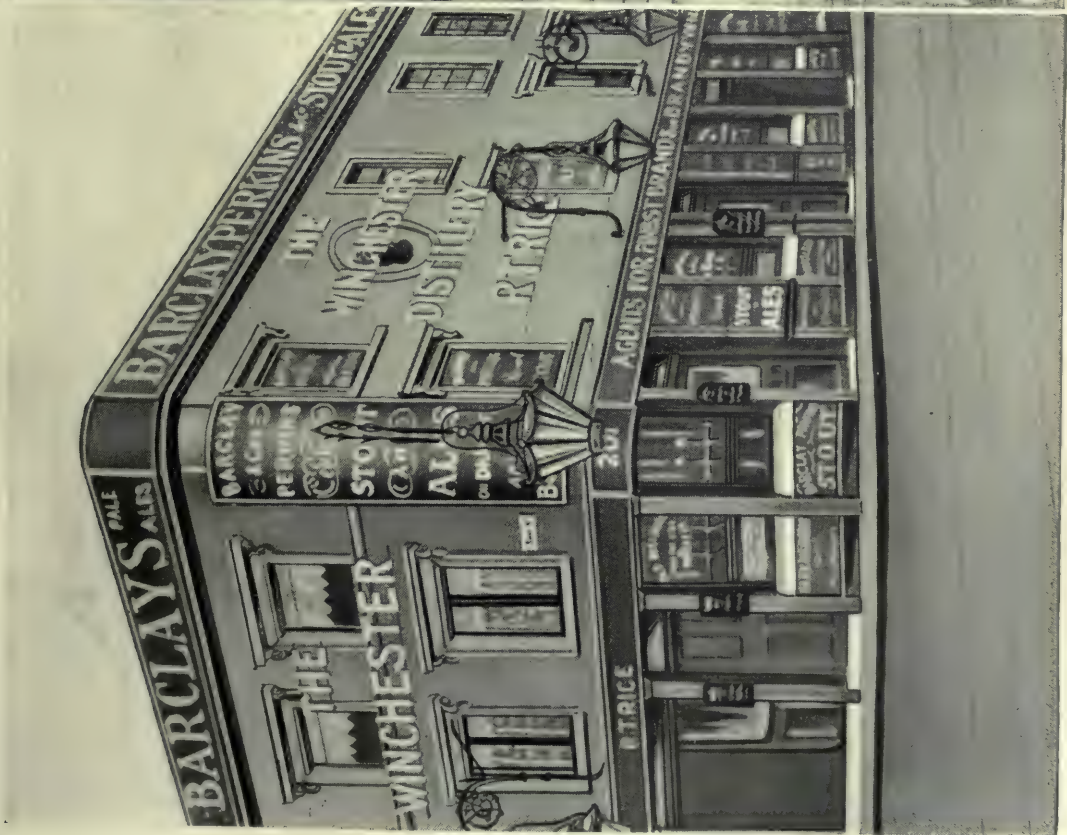
Bass said: "There is in the country, I understand, a large number of men who seemed determined, if possible, to have Mr. Vincent as their General Secretary. He had been connected with this agitation among railwaymen for many years, but he has been more actively engaged than ever during the last twelve months, having addressed various meetings in different parts of the country, at nearly all of which, I believe, he has been very enthusiastically received. I do not myself recommend anybody for any office connected with the society. I felt that it was beyond my province to do so. The duty of electing officers devolved entirely upon the railway servants who were members of the society." Langley pointed out that this was precisely the course which had been pursued, but the men in the country objected to the appointment of a General Secretary, *pro tem.*, which they had nothing to do with, inasmuch as they had not yet joined it. Of course, when they did become members they would be able to elect whomsoever they liked, but until then they had really no voice in the matter. A delegate from Battersea stated that his branch formally elected Vincent for President and G. Chapman as Secretary. The delegate from Birmingham stated that the rules which had been drawn up were unsatisfactory and would not meet the requirements of the society for six months, though he admitted that the rules were in substance the same as those which were in operation with the A.S.E., of which he approved, for them, but they were not suitable to the differing conditions of railway life.

The Derby delegate said the men at that place had expressed a determination to have Mr. Vincent as General Secretary, and no one else. The Birmingham delegate also made a similar statement, adding that 400 men were ready to join the society, but they would not do so because Vincent was not the General Secretary. A member of the E.C. said that on every part of the South-Eastern the men were to a man in favour of Chapman. Samuel Morley thought it would be impossible for either to be elected by a unanimous vote. They had better both retire and reconstruct on a new basis. Bass replied that he should very much like to see several new features introduced into the society's rules. It ought to provide a scheme for the widows and orphans of those members who were killed in the discharge of their duties, as well as objects of a similar nature. Vincent made a short statement of his connection with the movement, after which it was agreed to hold another meeting that day fortnight to consider the rules, which Morley had offered to put before a legal friend. The meeting of April to arrange the programme was the ultimate outcome of this.

The report of the "Beehive," recording the proceedings, said: "There was at one time the greatest possible danger of a split between the metropolitans and the provincials owing to the misrepresentation of certain interested parties, but mutual explanations and the general spirit of concession which prevailed on all sides removed



306, City Road, London, E.C.



The Winchester Arms, Southwark



The First Delegate Meeting, 1872

these difficulties. Part of the misunderstanding arose from the suppression of a letter of the Chairman in an organ claiming to represent the interests of the men to which the programme had been sent a fortnight before. Several gentlemen in the room complained of similar suppressions, and pointed out that the columns of the journal were occupied by the Editor's old communications which had been in the 'Daily Telegraph' months ago. But the men who had come together were resolute not to be misled from the purpose of consolidating the union, and the meeting broke up with cordial expressions of good feeling on all sides, and sat for nearly seven hours."

This agrees with Graham's letter above. Vincent had not a finger in this business at all. Chapman had what he thought ought to be his special preserve; and now, behold, Graham was in the field doing service. More and more the "Gazette" party saw the game was up; and they would be wreckers rather than be defeated, or because they were defeated. After the meeting with Bass on March 26th the "Gazette" on April 6th said: "The General Secretaryship. It is with unfeigned satisfaction that we announce that the slight misunderstanding between the two gentlemen who are ambitious to occupy the responsible position of General Secretary is in a fair way towards an amicable adjustment. Undoubtedly it would have been better if those whom the matter entirely concerned—the railway servants—had remained unaware that there existed any disagreement at the head of affairs. It was in order to assist newspaper discussion on the subject that we were at the pains of writing an article pointing out the momentous question 'Who shall be leaders?' The probable results of the said conference it would be premature to discuss," but then the E.C. had discussed it when this appeared, and passed the following resolution: "This E.C. desire to express their deep regret at the dissension prevalent among railwaymen and publicly declare their desire to adopt any course which may be calculated to consolidate the union of railway employés. That this Council regards the union of greater consequence than the claims of any man for a place of office, and repudiates any intention of setting aside or evading the deliberate decision of the men who are willing to join the society, either in the election of officers or the final settlement of rules."

This is how the "Gazette" sneered and lied: "Exception may be taken to the words as well as the sense of this declaration, and this paper being devoted to the interests of railwaymen, it is our simple duty, on their behalf, to take it. In the first place we were unaware of the 'dissension' among the men that moved the Executive Council to such deep regret. So far as we understand the matter, the disagreement has been between those who are aspiring to lead and govern the society, the men who should have been the first to show an example of amity and concord. . . . We are loth to appear harsh. . . . 'The Executive Council have no intention of evading or setting aside the deliberate decisions of the men.'

Just imagine an E.C. harbouring such a preposterous contention. It is a mistake to talk so to men who are shrewdly capable of minding their own affairs, and shows more than ever the necessity of 'trying back' a few paces of the ground in certain quarters that is already occupied, and of giving every railwayman in the kingdom the opportunity, by votes, his opinion as to who is the most fittest man to take the helm." The concluding part of the E.C. resolution was: "Moreover, this Council desires to place on record that they believed at the outset that no permanent settlement of these questions would be arrived at unless the rules were first registered and officers elected for the time being, but the society being now legally constituted, they desire at the earliest convenient time a meeting to be held of the members of the various branches, and duly elected by them, to constitute a general meeting with power to revise and elect an Executive Council, with such permanent officers as that meeting may consider necessary." This was in accord with all previous actions. A committee was then formed to prepare the basis of such delegate meeting, and to arrange the proceedings that branches which were unable to send delegates should be enabled to record their wishes as to any alteration in the rules they desired.

The issue of May the 4th came out with this: "As it is possible that some of our numerous patrons occasionally see the 'Beehive,' and, more probable still, that a considerable number will find it conveniently at their elbow for perusal, we deem it necessary to offer a few remarks relative to a long letter that appeared in the columns from the pen of Dr. Baxter Langley, Esq., LL.D. Dr. Langley writes to inform the men of the railway world that he is driven to seek a new channel of communication with them in consequence of the Editor of the 'Railway Service Gazette,' with which he is from time to time supplied. Further, he accuses the same unlucky Editor of suppressing his (Dr. Baxter Langley's) letters. As for the first part of these accusations, it is so manifestly at variance with fact that we need not say a word concerning it. We had scores of thousands of readers before Dr. Langley's name, through the instrumentality of the A.S.R.S., was known to them. Our fourteen numbers stand out, each one in plain contradiction of Dr. Langley's assertion. In our first issue a compact was made between us and those who handsomely promised us support that on all occasions would we receive and print accounts of any meeting, however small, that was held for the purpose of furthering the society's legitimate aims, and we can confidently say that never on any occasion have we shrunk from our bargain. We should be glad to know on what authority Dr. Langley accuses us. If he does so on hearsay, all that we can say is he has been shamefully deluded. If he really believes that he himself has sent us matter that we have neglected to print it is still more lamentable, since the man who deludes himself is most deluded of all. It may be that in some moment of fatigue, induced by the exertion of that enormous philanthropy for which

Dr. Langley is renowned, the worthy doctor dreamt that he had written a report and addressed it to Fullwood Rents. All that we know about the matter is that we have never received from Doctor Langley a single line of any report whatever that we have failed to print, though, such is our editorial audacity, that we should have been bold enough not only to have declined contributions as unsuitable, were such a thing possible from such a source. But we repeat most emphatically that Dr. Langley never did send us a report that we did not print, and we are altogether bewildered as to how he could have got it into his head that he had done so. Why, in the name of all that is straightforward, should we for our readers' sake, as well as our own, we shall not find it convenient to remove? Why, then, should they be closed against a gentleman who never allows us to forget the fact that he is devoted heart and soul every day and every hour of his existence to the improving of his politically and socially downtrodden fellow creature. One way or another Dr. Langley appears to make out a case against us. By some subtle process of reasoning, peculiar perhaps to men of his versatile genius, he seems to have made up his mind beforehand that it would be difficult for him to get along with us as nicely as he could desire. Maybe he has doubts whether this, the recognised organ of railway reform, would hail him with rejoicing and as an advantage to the cause; the attachment of a gentleman who is a prominent member of the Odger brotherhood and a public professor of those glorious principles that have won renown for the 'Hole in the Wall,' a renowned record to that of no other pot-house in England. If that is the case he does us scant justice. We are bound to admit when it first came to our knowledge that a star of the Langley magnitude had on a certain memorable Sunday evening descended all unexpected into the midst of a social gathering of railwaymen at Walworth and there and then declared his settled determination to be their chairman, and to remain everlastingly their constant friend and champion, we were in the least degree amazed. We were somewhat afraid that he might not quite understand the new line of business he was so eager to embark in, but we attended a certain meeting and were speedily convinced that Dr. Langley's eloquence is of a sort that can accommodate itself to circumstances, and we find him as much at home and as sweetly persuasive among peaceful railwaymen as when a few days before he haranged a mob on some highly important political question at Blackheath, and where, in his thundering indignation, he raised such a dust from the coal wagon which he occupied as a platform that for several seconds his noble figure loomed but mistily to the public view. We think we never saw Dr. Langley to such advantage as on that occasion.

"If he has a fault, it is an excess of candour that beguiles him into making known in so loud a tone that even the deaf may obtain an inkling of it, how thoroughly disinterested he is; he seems to have faith in the capacity of his own good nature to absorb every

atom of disinterestedness in the world, so as to make it mere bare-faced presumption on the part of anyone else to lay claim to possessing the least bit. But this is not a vice, it is only a pleasing weakness, at which his well-wishers may wink, and still recognise in him a man of worth. At all events, we hope the delusion by this time has vanished, and that in his capacity as Chairman (pro tem.) of the A.S.R.S. he will walk with us in the paths of pleasantness, and not suffer his fancied grievance into doing us real injustice. Dr. Langley should bear in mind, as we all along have done, that the prime, the first and foremost consideration, is the welfare of the men, and that any person who under any pretence whatever diverts the attention of those whose only aim is to secure to them a continuance of the benefits and advantages of a really well-constituted society is the greatest enemy the men can have."

Wisdom is justified of all her children. The Council, under Dr. Langley's wise guidance, were repairing their mistakes. At this stage wisdom was with it; they worked with its aid, and then came this "bolt from the blue." Violence and abuse defeats its object, and it did so here. It also revealed to the provincials things as they really were. The London Council, as we have seen, had made overtures and concessions to the provincials, and their outstretched hand was grasped. A whole series of meetings was in swing in both London and the provinces at this time. The railway workers' world was at fever heat. In London the meetings were so crowded that hundreds had to be turned away, and Langley, like Mercury, flitted from place to place addressing as many as three meetings in one night; and Chapman preceded or followed him. These two were the star turns. Croydon, Bethnal Green, and Camden Town were among the places where men were unable to get inside the suffocating halls. So the provincials, Manchester, Stourbridge, Worcester, Burslem, Guide Bridge, and others on one day. Camden among the London ones has the greatest point of interest, not alone that it was the establishment of the Camden Branch, but for the tornado of eloquence that Langley meted out to them. He, in a "forcible, truthful, and eloquent speech," with varying words gave bed-rock truths, answered questions, and explained where explanation was asked, so convincing all of the oneness of the aim all men had, the purity of motive, and the success which was spreading like a prairie fire, nearly all present enrolled themselves. The United Kingdom was alive; movement was everywhere. The railway chairmen were dotting the "i's" and crossing the "t's" of the agitator. They were pessimistic, but their pessimism was the optimism of the agitator. They knew they were not merely heralds of a new dawn, but that the day had broken and the shadows had begun to flee away.

To say that the leader of the "Gazette" created astonishment would be a beggary of words. It stunned them for a moment, but it was at the same time all-revealing. Provincials saw as they never saw before what was going on, and it must be understood that Vincent

was nominally the controller of the paper. This is Vincent's comment on it: "Here was an astounding editorial, which met the eyes of thousands of readers of different positions and opinions, and caused as much comment as would in all likelihood have been the case had all the letters from those who complained because of their non-appearance; and coming from such a quarter, too, made it of extraordinary importance." What had called forth this extraordinary leader? Langley, in the "Beehive" of April 27th, 1872, had written a letter in which was set out in full the twelve clauses, as they were originally brought before the London and provincial men, and they occupied one column of the three-column letter that Langley wrote the "Beehive." He wrote:—

"As I am known to your readers as an old labourer for the Ten-Hour Bill and other enactments for the reduction of the customary day's work, I feel sure you will give me space for a letter on the position of the railway employés and the history of the movement that is now going on amongst them for the amelioration of their conditions. The wrongs of the class of men who are employed in this department of labour are not only cruel to themselves, but dangerous to all railway travellers. These wrongs consist of low wages for responsible duties, broken contracts, excessive hours without payment for overtime, continuous employment night and day, on special occasions, producing exhaustion and inefficiency in the service highly dangerous to the public.

"Many attempts have been made from time to time to induce the railwaymen to co-operate, but the Labour market being glutted with men seeking such engagements the railwaymen did not dare to move. Even now there is a great timidity on the part of many, but by the munificence of Mr. Bass and the labours of other gentlemen advantage has been taken of the present condition of the labour market to produce some sort of combination amongst the railway employés throughout the kingdom, and there is a widespread desire to form an effective union under the title of 'The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants.'

"Unfortunately, however, the facility for combination in the London district and the promptness of the men in the metropolis in putting the society on a legal basis has created some jealousy in the provinces, a jealousy fostered and encouraged by certain people who charge the London men with the desire to elect a particular gentleman as General Secretary, whilst the men in the provinces seem equally anxious to thrust upon the London men another gentleman whose antecedents are not satisfactory to the metropolitan men. The advice given by Mr. Bass and myself is: 'Unite without reference to either of these candidates for office, and then elect your officers when you have got your union.'

"My view, and I believe it to be logically as well as practically correct, is that you cannot make any appeal to universal suffrage unless there is established and acknowledged a provisional committee,

which shall have the power of arranging the details of the first delegate meeting, out of which the *permanent constitution* may legally arise. It is the duty of the provisional government to secure the effective expression of the popular will. With this view, and as a beginning, I accepted the Executive Council, formed by the London men, viz., as a provisional government, to prepare for the appeal to the suffrage of the whole of the members. It was found necessary, however, to do more than elect a committee. The appeal to the members could not be conducted without expense. Who was to receive the funds? The law gave no protection for those funds unless the society was enrolled, but the society could not be enrolled without rules and officers. So these have been elected and rules prepared and enrolled as a temporary arrangement to bring the whole affair into legal existence. Some mistakes have perhaps been committed, but there are none which cannot be remedied by the delegate meeting proposed to be held in June, if arrangements can be completed by that time."

Then follows the proposed programme, the amended form as given above, with many suggestions as to cost and other things. He continues :—

"I regret to state that this financial necessity has not been clearly understood by some of our friends, and especially by the editor of a journal specially claiming to attend to the interests of the railway employés, and who, having no experience in such matters, has been encouraging the notion that anyone from anywhere could come up to this delegate meeting without any authority from anybody and vote for anything, having his expenses paid by nobody knows whom. This loose and impracticable notion is supposed to be gratifying to the provincial men, and therefore the journal referred to refuses to insert communications respectfully demonstrating the absurdity of the position. But I have faith that they will see the truth of the matter and judge for themselves where the commonsense lies. Time is, however, being wasted in the interval by the misrepresentations and suppressions of the journal referred to.

"For myself I seek no office or pay of any kind, and shall retire from the position to which the London men have done me the honour to elect me as soon as the delegate meeting has been properly constituted and the permanent government has been elected. Now, as then, I shall always continue to labour, as I have done all my life, for shorter hours and better wages for the working classes."

The "Beehive," in its issue of May 11th, 1872, replied to the "Gazette's" fulminations in a very moderate article, for them, because it was particularly abusive to Howell, Applegarth, and others. For instance, in one article they had traduced Applegarth, and he replied that he did not intend to reply to personal charges, the paper retorting, "Cowards are always liars." Such were the amenities of this journal. But here it took a very high mental outlook in the page and a-half of its leader: "Into the controversy between Dr.

Langley and our contemporary we have no disposition to enter. We know how profitless all controversies are which are not carried on for the vindication of principles or the defence of honest and important interests; and we know also how paltry and how damaging to a good cause all wordy contentions of a contracted and personal character must be."

True, Potter did. He had more than tasted it; he had fed on it; and now the "Beehive" in its 552nd issue was becoming quite mellow, wise, and prudent. The article lifts the whole matter out of the region of personality, puts it on the high pinnacle of general interest, that of Labour, not of railwaymen alone, but of all: "If our action in favour of working men's movements did not rest on a solid foundation of faith and duty it would have ceased or slackened long ago." Who that has stood in the very centre of working-class movements will not subscribe to it? They have—the present writer has—threatened, like the ancient prophet, to speak nor to work any more in their name. But "it was as fire in our bones; we were weary with forbearing and could not stay," said Potter. "We stand now at a critical point in the Labour struggle," and it pointed with unerring judgment to facts as they faced the Labour world then, showed the cause was greater than any man or men. "The men of the railways have also a great work in hand. They have been oppressed and ground down by a system of work over which singly they have not the least possible control. Amount of wages, length of week-day hours, Sunday work, or whatever is or can be an evil they must put up with it and suffer from it out of union. But all these can be altered by the power of well-organised association. Under ordinary circumstances no men are more powerless. They have little uninterrupted time for communication with each other. But if opposed by their employers personal sympathy or kindly consideration is not likely to reach them through boards of directors. There never was a body of men whose success in any effort they may make to improve their conditions depended so much on organised action and united action, and he, therefore, ought to be kept out of these disputes which lead to personal contentions and divisions. . . . We are anxious to see railway servants perfectly agreed as to the changes in their system of work which may promise them most good. We are desirous that to secure these changes they should act with absolute unity of purpose, without dividing councils or counteracting and weakening influences, and any word uttered anywhere that can have the effect of producing weakness and division is so much taken from the strength of the men and added to that of their employers. If railway servants lag behind the general movement they risk the success they are aiming at."

It is a message for the ages, which is always true, and never changes. A truth may become obsolete, but it never can become error. Here is a truth that is immortal. Action never stayed for these

things. They were but interludes that lessened the tedium of hard work. Organisation went on and on. Perhaps London and Manchester were more active than any. The results were seen in Stratford, Manchester and Stratford being the premier branches. Not that the "Gazette" was of any effective value. It was as dull as was the "Railway Review" when under the same Greenwood hand. There was no life, no spirit, no fire, no guidance, nothing to attract the thoughtful, nothing to enlighten the ignorant; it lived for Vincent, and Vincent was division. Reasoned calm was not with them. The man was greater than the cause. They preferred to stand with Vincent among ruins than not to stand at all. This was not the end. The "Gazette" promised to insert a reply to its leader, but the promise was not redeemed; it was sent to the "Beehive" and inserted there, and he takes up the charges against him one by one, and they vanish into thin air. The only thing that concerns this history is the charge of suppression. With regard to that, Langley wrote: "The letter was written at my office in office hours, and as it was unusual for me to write anything of the kind during these hours, the fact that I was writing to the 'Railway Service Gazette' was known to my daughter and my clerks, all of them distinctly remembering the fact. Very few communications being sent by post from this office, it is distinctly within the memory of my junior clerk that he delivered the letter in question at Fullwood Rents. He also distinctly remembers bringing a message back that Mr. Greenwood would write me thereon. A short time afterwards I received a note signed 'James Greenwood' referring to the contents of the letter in question. That gentleman must, therefore, have received it. The letter was written at the request of the E.C., and was not a private letter from me. It embodied the programme of the delegate meeting."

He also showed how from internal evidence in that paper that Greenwood had received it. He also stated that his going to the meeting at the Montpelier was by invitation, and he was invited to take the chair. He suggested a railwayman should do so. Two declined, and he had six witnesses to the truth of that. At the next E.C. meeting Langley gave all details, and then asked: "Am I a liar or Greenwood?" In the same issue of the "Gazette" where this appeared was this: "As will be seen by reference to another part of this week's issue a meeting of the A.S.R.S. took place at the Winchester Arms, Southwark, Dr. Baxter Langley, Esq., LL.D., in the chair. We regret to say that the gentleman above mentioned took occasion to express himself in language which we as faithful chroniclers are compelled to print, but for the insertion of which we ask pardon of our respectable readers. It is no fault of ours that Dr. Baxter Langley, Esq., LL.D., inclines to language not commonly heard away from Seven Dials or select public-house gatherings known as friendly leads. We do not say it is Dr. Langley's *fault*. It may be a constitutional infirmity. There is this consolation, however, especially valuable under existing circumstances, it makes railwaymen

aware of how powerful this gentleman can 'speechify' when he gives full flow to his natural talent."

This could not continue. Bass knew it, Vincentite though he was. Such were the pleasantries of unity. But on June 8th, 1872, Greenwood had to retire, after having refused to accept the notice previously given. Langley had threatened an action for libel. Greenwood claimed a year's notice, and brought an action to enforce it or the wages for that period, which was to come on at the Guildford Sessions. Hawkins, afterwards made a Judge, was on the side of the paper. Sergeant Parry was for Greenwood. The case was, however, settled for £150 just before the time of the trial. These dissensions gave the little bark a rough passage before even it had time to get into the open sea.

It is, however, quite clear that London was winning gradually the confidence of the country, and Graham being here and there helped that feeling. So just at that time, a meeting was held at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, at which Robert Salmon presided, who became one of the delegates to the general meeting just ahead. Salmon said an idea had got abroad among some classes of railway workers that their society was not constituted upon a sound basis. This was quite a mistake, whilst Graham brought the heartening message that in the Midland Counties, especially in Birmingham, they were making rapid progress. One disadvantage was that they had sometimes to work secretly. What the society wanted was a few independent men who were not afraid of saying what they thought, but if they did they must take risks, and that his own mysterious discharge from the Midland had rather discouraged some.

Just at that time an incident happened that put the London men on their mettle, and though they were powerless to take drastic action they put it to effective use in organising. They even threatened to strike. It concerned one Parmenter Tarbox, and for months in these ancient records Tarbox keeps confronting the line of vision. Anyway, it made the Camden Town Branch a strong one. Tarbox was one of the pioneers, and he was dismissed because he took part in the formation of the society. It is amusing to read the lengthy report of a meeting of protest that was held in the Milton Hall, Camden. Hall and galleries were crowded, and many were unable to get into the hall. Tarbox, it seems, was called to the superintendent's office and accused of attending Trade Union meetings. He admitted and gloried in the alleged offence. He was then told that he might go to the society and see what they would do for him; was given a week's wages in lieu of notice, and told not to show his face in the yard again. It was a stormy meeting. Chapman presided till Langley came. A resolution of sympathy for the victim, which the newspaper report of that day, after reporting it at great length, said, "led to a scene of excitement rarely witnessed at a public meeting. The whole assembly, densely crowded as it was, rose, and the chairman being called upon to honour the vote given to him—(that is, Langley)—

when he rose, they honoured him by giving the 'Kentish Fire' in such a style that it shook the building."

Still another meeting, equally warm. Even more excitement was caused when Greenish, the one who was concerned in the discharge, forced himself, with a little protecting band, into the hall and made some remark, when Boon, who was speaking, invited him to the platform, and he went on and denounced agitators in fine style, and the meeting roared, shrieked, and yelled till it was a perfect pandemonium. Whilst Greenish was holding forth Shrivess came, and he said "Hear, hear," to a remark of Greenish. "Another paid agitator," said Greenish. Anyway they put Tarbox on his feet financially. Though Langley and others did what they could and the matter dragged on for weary months they did not succeed in reinstatement, and only showed the society's impotence. The Boon referred to became one of the society's organisers, and ranks with Chapman and Vincent among the incompetents. The Shrivess referred to became a Trustee, was far away the most intellectual of any of the London men, was secretary of the London and Provincial Railway Servants' Sick Society, and secretary of the Carmen's Union. All that he took part in came down with a crash, except ourselves. One must not measure moral failings in one sphere of work to damage other parts, though they cast their shadows about. But Shrivess did excellent work.

The meetings of the society during May and June were held everywhere, and to detail them would be to put the places of the "A.B.C." time table into our pages. One name ought to be mentioned, that of Canon Jenkins, who spoke at Merthyr Tydvil, because he became the society's President. At most of these meetings references were made to the "Great Delegate Meeting," definitely fixed for June 24th. This, with the election of General Secretary, was the internal theme. Langley moved from point to point like a whirlwind, counselling patience, wisdom, and peace. He was accommodating to the countrymen almost to the point of weakness. London termed concessions weakness, diplomacy an error of judgment, but he braved the anger of his friends, made approach after approach, steered with consummate skill, and in those months he must have only occasionally slept. He was here, there, and everywhere, guiding, counselling, and inspiring. His energy was contagious. He set effort on fire, gripped the helm hard, and steered well; seemed to foresee and prepare for every need, scent every danger. He framed their resolutions and executed them. The master mind was there, and he stamped his personality upon all; and the men loved him, though he had, when occasion demanded, to speak in strong language.

At the Executive meeting in the last week of May it was a sort of clearing the decks for action. Cosgrove, the nominal proprietor of the "Gazette" for Bass, had an ultimatum sent him that they would make the "Beehive" the organ. It did its work. A change came. Vincent was then opening branches without regard to the Central Council, and Langley was asked to write to him and others,

that they had more zeal than discretion. The General Secretary as a permanent factor came up, and it was always with personalities. "Let us have efficiency," said Langley. Langley also reported that an advertisement had been sent to the "Times" seeking for a General Secretary. It was sent on the 17th, but did not appear till the 20th, leaving but five days for candidates to send in their applications. It appeared in the "Times" (of all papers!) of May 20th, 1872, wedged in between an advertisement for an assistant to the Glamorgan Reformatory School and an assistant master for a free school at Walsingham, Norfolk. These were the terms: "Secretary wanted. By the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, a gentleman to act as General Secretary. Must be over forty years of age, with good address and accustomed to conduct correspondence and keep accounts. A guarantee of £200 will be required. Salary, £250 a year. Applications, with references and copies of testimonials, to be made by letter only to Dr. Baxter Langley, 50, Lincolns Inn Fields, on or before May 20th, 1872."

Langley reported at the following E.C. meeting that seventy-four candidates had entered the field, of whom forty were gentlemen of high qualifications. That it would be the duty of the Sub-Committee to examine the applications, some of which occupied thirty-two pages of printed matter. Several were managers of departments in the railway service. Among the candidates were some names well known to them, whilst one gentleman who was certainly expected to be a candidate had not sent in his application. He had taken special care that he should be informed of the advertisement, as he had both telegraphed and written to a friend who was in communication with him. He was sorry that the gentleman referred to had not sent in his application, nor had he communicated with him, although he had been seen in the metropolitan district. In the "Beehive" for May 31st, 1872, there is a two-column letter from Langley on the leader page and in the same type, dealing with the question of the election of General Secretary. He says of the selected ones:—

"The six names so selected are to be put to the votes of the members by lists sent to each branch contributing its levy to the delegate expenses fund. I should have preferred the preferential system of voting and recommended it to the provincial men, through Mr. Graham, but his correspondents seem to prefer the ordinary system of majority voting. Probably the plan ultimately decided upon will be for the officers of each branch to give the number of votes of their members for each candidate if there be any difference of opinion, the names of the candidates nominated by the selecting committee being placed in alphabetical order. I trust that the men throughout the country will regard the election as one of the deepest consequence to themselves and to the future of their class, and that they will cast aside all personal considerations of every kind and elect the ablest and best man that can be obtained. I do not ask railwaymen to forget personal services rendered to them by men

who are known and deservedly respected by them; I ask them to estimate their services as they severally deserve and to show a grateful liberality to them each and all. The appointment of General Secretary, however, may not be a suitable reward for such labours. On the contrary, no greater cruelty could be inflicted upon such friends than to place them in a position which they may not be competent to fill. I do not presume to say they are incompetent, but whilst I estimate the good qualities and the noble intentions of them all, I notice an immense difference between the fitness of some where punctuality, energy, untiring diligence, patient work, prompt correspondence, financial accuracy, and conscientious prudence will be taxed to the uttermost. I cannot advise that we look among entire strangers, but rather that we secure someone who has already given public guarantees of his earnestness and ability. I have no friend to recommend and no enemy to oppose. I trust that the best man may win. I have no personal interest to serve, because, fortunately, I have no requirement for any position which the society could offer me, and the advice I presume to give is that of a man who only holds his official position as a temporary arrangement until the permanent constitution of the society can be established by the delegates and representatives of the railwaymen themselves. My resignation will be the first business of the meeting on June 24th. I shall then, I hope, feel that my labours have been, to some extent, instrumental in consolidating union and removing causes of dissension, and that my work is done, unless there are difficulties which after a time call for my help. I see no reason why I should sacrifice my comfort to take part in an organisation where, however disinterestedly I may labour, my motives and my acts are wilfully misrepresented by a newspaper, the mendacity and ignorance of whose editor is a standing danger to the movement in which many earnest men are engaged, a danger all the greater because the enemy is hidden behind the mask of a hypocritical friend. To me personally his action is beneath contempt, but my time is too valuable to waste it in perpetual explanation of the stupid errors, or in contradiction of the still more stupid misrepresentations of the person referred to. If the railwaymen have an organ they have the right to insist that it shall at least be just to their friends, or that it shall cease to be their organ. If they cannot control it for good, the sooner they take away from it that support which enables it to be mischievous the better."

Two things should be noted here: his advocacy of the preferential system, which came into vogue in our elections forty-one years after, and the advocacy of their own organ, which became a fact eight years after.

Vincent was not a candidate. Why? Not in his "Authentic History" nor in his articles on "Railway Reformation" in the "Railway Review" of 1884-5 does he tell us. This is all he says in the latter with reference to it: "One of the most important events

transacted at this period was the election of General Secretary. I shall not here occupy the reader's attention respecting myself in relation to it, as it is more the subject of autobiography; but I may say that somehow or other my name was not placed on the list among the other candidates." That is all. Was it due to that slothfulness of action, hesitation, and indecision which in all his life characterised him, or was it a mischance? Let us see. There is an air of mystery about it all. Hid in that organ of the classes, the "Times," the advertisement might well have been overlooked by Vincent, if he had not had many friends. He informed a railwayman at Wolverhampton that, not having seen the advertisement, he had sent his application to the office of the "Gazette," as the registered office of the society; 308, New Cross Road, was Chapman's private address. Did he think that Chapman would be such a fool as to tamper with such a communication, which would have damned him for ever when known? The Editor of the paper, a personal friend, replied that he had not received the application. If he had he would not be likely to forget it, or to do the needful with regard to it. Langley above says he took pains to ensure that Vincent, if he wished, should know of the advertisement. It was Penzer, of Wolverhampton, that Langley telegraphed to requesting him to let Vincent know. Penzer replied that he had seen Vincent and urged him to send in an application. Bladen, of Birmingham, did the same. The E.C. also, in order to remove any future friction, because they knew Vincent, resolved that instructions should be given to the Sub-Committee for the selection of candidates, that should Vincent's application arrive it should be placed with the others, on his producing a letter of recommendation from Mr. Bass, for whom he had lately been acting. It was felt that a testimonial from Mr. Bass would justify them making an exception by an extension of time. Nothing came, and the poll was taken without Vincent's name. As a matter of fact, Mr. Bass gave a letter of recommendation for May, whom he well knew in his various connections with railways. Inference is not history, but the inference is, that Bass, like all others, found the real Vincent.

How did the "Gazette" deal with the candidates? This way: "In another column will be found a list of the various names of those who are candidates for the General Secretaryship. Mr. Thomas Bayley, of Harwich, is a traffic manager on one of the eastern lines of railway, a man of very great experience in railway matters, with some very excellent testimonials. Mr. John Graham, of Derby, is a gentleman of good education and considerable ability, and has been employed on railways for several years. He is tolerably well known to our readers. Mr. William Heath, of Newcastle, is an experienced railwayman. Mr. E. Courtney McDonald, of London, is a writer on railway subjects, as well as a practical railwayman. Mr. May, who has already been twice alluded to in our answers to correspondents, is the author of several papers on railway matters, and

had been employed on most of the principal railways of the country. We have left the extremely well-known name of Mr. George Chapman, the present General Secretary of the A.S.R.S., until the last. He is a man of considerable ability and great energy, conversant with every branch of the railway service, having been a railwayman himself, and he has been engaged in forming and consolidating great organisations of employés for many years. We do not in any way desire to influence the decision of the men with regard to election, but we consider it our duty to point out that they have before them on one side several gentlemen whose abilities they are comparatively unacquainted with, and on the other two gentlemen, Mr. Graham and Mr. Chapman, who are personally known to a large portion of the members, and one of them, moreover, has borne, and still bears, the burden and heat of the day." It had referred to May, but only to lampoon him.

The voting was :—

Chapman	1,489	Bayley	49
Graham	1,137	Heath	3
May	929	McDonald	3

Long years after it was found that had the vote been unorganised, and even with organisation worked fairly, Graham would have been at the helm. Poplar Branch was returned as having 600 members; its proportionate vote was therefore large, whereas at the end of 1872 it only showed 156 members, whilst its contributions had been only £6 11s. 6d., and its entrance fees altogether, with the rapid coming and going of that time, were only 401. Pearce, its first delegate, revealed in after years the true inwardness of the vote.

The road was now clear for the "Great Delegate Meeting." During May Langley was also in the country at meetings as far apart as Cardiff and London. South Wales was the one weak spot, but it had this advantage, that it had no faction. It was far removed from it all, and took no part in it. But the torch had been lit, and it was spreading in South Wales. The Cardiff meeting was a gathering of the Welsh clans. They came from all parts to hear the doctor and to learn of the new organisation, and the report says: "He went into the business in such a spirited manner as to show he was no stranger in matters of such great and deep importance." Almost his last speech before the Congress, which weighed heavily on him, was :—

"Show your employers that you are not unreasonable or vindictive; prove to the public that their own cause was the interest and safety of those who travelled." He counselled prudence in language, caution in acts, and faith in each other. He smarted, there is little doubt, and felt keenly the intrigues by which he was surrounded, but he held on his way. Those who work for the public weal have to take risks and suffer indignities, and have motives impugned. But they must forget personal discomforts in their work and aim, not be deterred

by slander, nor unduly elated by praise. They are investing in ideas and applying principles, as a capitalist is employing cash, for a return, and the propagandist with new ideas or the fertilisation of old, with fruitfulness as an aim, cannot be like a bricklayer or painter and see the work grow under his hands, seeing nothing grow may assume there is no growth. Both are investments, both the cash and the work of the brain, or both together, he must sow on and trust to the ripening influence of intelligence, and he may come with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

To avoid duty because there is danger is cowardice. Ideas, as well as life, are made perfect through suffering, and to complain of non-appreciation, or even of disapprobation, though natural, is petulance without dignity and the exaltation of the ego.

Langley protested too much. He had the brain to conceive and the hand to execute, and he should have used both and left certain sections alone. It would have made his effective work more effective still. He planned programmes, wrote out resolutions, ruled the men with tactical skill, as to lead them to believe that they were ruling him. He was outspoken, sometimes held a candle too close to the devil. The material he had to work upon was not of the best.

Professor Craik, in his "Outlines of the History of the British Working-Class Movement," has put this period, when he says: "In the beginning was the deed." In the beginning necessity acted blindly in the struggles of the workers against capitalism. They suffered, but they did not know why; they struggled, but they knew not the real nature of the antagonist. Gradually the exigencies of the struggle and the all-compelling necessity to carry it on with more irresistible equipment and elan have awakened the recognition that that which has to be overcome must first of all be understood." To understand the nature and extent of the task we set our hands to is the first step towards achievement. They had begun to know.



THE ROADMAKER, 1871-1921.

Chapter VI

THE DEAR OLD PIONEERS.

THE long-looked-for and much-talked-of "Great Delegate Meeting" at length arrived. It was held at the Sussex Hotel, Bouverie Street, Fleet Street, London. The delegates who composed it are, as far as is known, all dead, with the exception of John Graham. They deserve more honour than has yet been accorded them. They had found "the truth that brings to captive souls the wider liberty," and from now onward they were going to build upon the foundations of these virtues.

Those who had mistrusted and doubted each other were now face to face. At more than one period it was stormy. A letter had been received from Edinburgh, making suggestions, which Langley read, and Whitmore accused him of leaving out the name of Vincent in the reading. This was denied by Langley and handed down, and even then Whitmore thought it had been doctored. Evidently there had been some intimation of its coming and contents divulged to Whitmore; but the letter had been redrafted before sending. He was an erascible individual, but he was a worker, every inch of him. His mind might be warped by prejudice; he often struck blindly and in anger. What he did was with heart and soul. He gripped his friends with hooks of steel, but to an enemy, being afflicted with *cacoëthes scribendi*, would more often than not steep his pen in gall. Once in a letter he sent to the "Gazette" the Editor said this of it. "We have been obliged to curtail your letter; it was too abusive. You should write in a kindlier tone." Jeffs and he came dangerously near expulsion from the Congress. But, then, these things nearly always form a part of new organisations, and at that period there was not only a lack of organisation, but educational lack.

Labour organisation, for the most part, had been confined to skilled trades, so that outside definite trades there was no guiding experience. To form a compact organisation whose strength can defy time cannot but be difficult. Zeal is good, but knowledge and wisdom must attend even that. Here were men, some of them unacquainted, as the proceedings show, with the elementary rules governing assemblies or debates, yet the foundations were well and truly laid. The essential features of government remain unchanged. Adaptation to changing times and newer experience there has been; time has given, and men have learned, lessons. Picture it if you can. Here were men wishful to force upon the attention of all their

class the ruling idea that Labour must unite in order to be strong, yet hardly any knowing his fellow, whether trust can be reposed in him or not, working secretly and silently. The true spirit has so far wrought that a young organisation is born, and a few men have stepped into the zone of danger, to declare great principles, to win adherents. Pioneer work is hard work, it is dangerous work often, as even some of this assembly had found, but they put all to the test and became builders of men. Scattered ideas took shape, suspicion and mistrust died by contact, self-respect, independence, and liberty became real, the future a hope and a plan. It was hardly to be expected that untutored minds, untrained in orderly thought and action, should reach perfection at a stride. They had at first no language but a cry, no action but revolt against established usages that galled. It was the ferment of freedom, a desire to do without knowing exactly what, new-born courage lacking directness and skill. The fitful gleams of previous organisations had only made darkness visible. This General Meeting was an aim that had strength in it, a voice resonant, if untrained. In the very short time that organisation had taken shape a few of these heralds had been stricken down, showing that these men counted the cost of the work they put their hands to.

Here are the standard-bearers: J. Abbott, Bedford, later of Wigston; J. Bull, Broad Street, G. Boon, Camden; G. Billoney, Hull; P. Bannister, Boston; J. Bowley, Wellingborough; T. Baker, T. Burns, and R. Salmon, Manchester; J. W. Biggs, A. Bladon, and C. Crossley, Birmingham; A. T. Cæsar, Doncaster; J. Carter and W. Manston, Stratford; S. Carr, Stourbridge; E. W. Champion, Bermondsey; J. Cordwell, Ardwick; F. Dance, Worcester; H. Dickenson, Salford; D. Dalton and E. Harford, Grimsby; H. Davis, Hereford; T. Evans, Bow; G. Foreman, Toton; J. T. Gladwin, Brighton; W. J. Gwynne, Plumstead; R. Gibson, Accrington; W. S. Grabbam and W. King, South-Eastern; J. Graham, Derby; T. Giles, Chester; F. Hornsby, Twickenham; E. Huntington, Newcastle; W. Higgs, Rugby; J. Harris, Longsight; W. Hoe, Sheffield; W. Jeffs, Nine Elms; R. Whitmore, Battersea; H. Kemp and J. Pafford, West End No. 1; E. Lunn, Wakefield; J. Morrish, Merthyr Tydfil; J. Marsden, Manchester; J. R. Peters, New Mills; J. R. Palmer, Gorton; T. Penzer, Wolverhampton; J. Price, Birkenhead; W. Reeves, Crystal Palace; A. Strenton, Burslem; E. W. Sainsbury, Brick Lane; J. Skinner, Dudley; T. Swinburne, Greatbridge; G. A. Skilling, Cardiff; C. Shrivess, King's Cross; J. Tucker, Pontypool; C. Turner, March; S. Wyatt, Aberdare; W. Whitehead, Leeds; J. Williams, Newport.

Abbott was sturdy, independent, thoughtful, and was a member of one of the old organisations in the sixties. Boon and Bull were two of the leaders in the first unauthorised strike of 1872 at Broad Street, L. & N. W., which brought discredit to the society and defeat to the men. Boon was some time in the employ of the society, and was dismissed. J. Bowley was the instigator of stoves in the goods

guards' vans, and resorted to extraordinary devices to further the agitation. He was dismissed the service. J. Carter nearly ruined the Stratford Branch, of which he was secretary, which, after the draymen's strike at Manchester, became the premier branch; J. Cordwell, one of the foremost men of Manchester, became one of the district secretaries, and died October 17th, 1881, having been one of those who made preparations for the second General Meeting at Manchester, 1881. Edward Harford became District Secretary, and afterwards General Secretary. Graham, of Derby, became the first organiser. Robert Whitmore all along the society's history was the "stormy petrel" of the society, and was finally expelled. Manston, of Stratford, was a very capable witness before the Royal Commission on Railway Accidents in Evans' time. Shrides, of King's Cross, was secretary of the Carmen's and Conveyancing Union, which started with the A.S.R.S., secretary of the London and Provincial Society of Railway Servants, a friendly society; both went smash. He was of the second batch of Trustees of the society. R. Salmon, who ran off the road at Derby Road, was concerned in an accident later at the Central Station, Manchester. His train approached at a considerable speed, against an order to reduce speed. It passed over the points, but when passing a curve the rail broke and the engine left the rails, and the carriages following, dashed into an adjacent signal-box, which it swept away, and the engine, going a little farther, fell on its side, the tender taking its place under the upper portion of the signal-box. The brake went to splinters. The fireman escaped unhurt. Bob said he heard the rail crack and then they were "all over the shop," and he remembered no more till he found himself in the infirmary with two ribs broken. He was afterwards employed on the Birmingham steam trams. The paucity of Welsh delegates shows that the organisation of Wales was much behind that of England.

Full of difficulties and apprehensive evils as was the situation this first General Meeting was full of hope. At the Winchester Arms week by week the Provisional Committee had held protracted meetings, where, among other things, they discussed elective methods for General Meeting, the basis of representation, and the mode of procedure formed out of plans submitted by Baxter Langley. After emendations and revisions plans were complete, and the workers, who had some of them doubted and mistrusted each other, met face to face. Again that fitful and baneful shadow Vincent flits across the stage, and the incident has in this one event an illustration of two personalities, that of Vincent, who for a brief period in the early part of 1872 had been announced as President in the literature of the society, with Chapman as Secretary, but he soon fell from that estate. Indecision, lack of grasp, a dilettante method, a failure to come to grips with difficult questions, acting when his strength would have been to sit still, not taking occasion by the hand when he should, Vincent had made no provision for delegacy to this meeting. Counting, as he had a right to do, that his past labours

and privations for unity entitled him to a passport for this meeting, neglected nominations he could have had by the score, in response to an outstretched hand, instead of which he found himself outside knocking for admission, and was refused.

Langley, always with an eye to dramatic effect, laid his plans. As soon as the meeting was constituted he presented his resignation. He had endeavoured, as far as he knew how, to act impartially to both town and country members, and if he had not pleased everyone, neglected any, it was due to the vast Executive duties as its Chairman. The programme, "with all its imperfections on its head," was his. He called them to separate the personal from the collective issues, not to turn aside or look back, but to lay firmly down on a just basis the foundations on which the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants should be reared, and a formation of a code of rules which should work beneficially for all parties who might be now and in the future connected with the railwaymen's great union. He was appointed Chairman of the Conference. Vincent the previous evening—itself an indiscreet thing, it having given Langley an opportunity, if he cared to, and did, use it to load the dice against him—had spoken to Langley about admittance, and on no other conceivable idea can it be suggested why, in consideration of his past services, Vincent should not have been admitted. He (Langley) had told him it was his duty to carry out the law strictly and let the delegates decide, and it was not till after the delegates had decided by thirty-eight votes to eighteen not to admit him that he read "a short address" of an encouraging nature from Vincent. Graham pleaded for him. Even if he had not been employed by the Executive he had done a great deal towards establishing the society. "Bob" Whitmore, of Battersea, our first "stormy petrel" alluded to, stood by Vincent, and with the vitriolic sarcasms which permeated all his speeches and voluminous letters defended him then and for all time. He was present, he said, when Chapman was elected Secretary, and Vincent had as much right to preside there as Langley.

It was when rules were produced that the babel of confusion began. Leeds, Doncaster, Manchester, and London had severally united to put the stamp of wisdom into our first rules. Before even these could be adopted for discussion sick funds and superannuation were advocated. To and fro swung the debate for or against Manchester, or London and Doncaster, which two had been bracketed. The voting was twenty-nine each side; a division confirmed it. Langley decided for Manchester. It was a dramatic stroke. The act, however, was typical of the shrewd tactfulness of the man; how quick his brain was to seize an essential thought. Brotherhood was bounded by the distinction of districts. London, eager, impetuous, perhaps selfish; the country suspicious, and by throwing his vote to Manchester he brought parties nearer each other.

Having settled that the Manchester production of rules should be discussed, the debate on fundamentals began. Langley, from opinions taken of many who had taken part in great movements, added to his gathered observations and personal experience. He advised an Executive of a fixed council of men, at the same time allowing the president and secretary of every branch throughout the kingdom to attend and take part in its deliberations, these being, in fact, *ex officio* members, which meant perfect freedom in bringing anything the branch wished before the Executive. This was the essence of crudeness, but branches were then not so numerous. The proposal would have had the effect of increasing the difficulties of the society in proportion as it grew; indeed, the quicker the growth the greater the difficulty. With expansion would be overburdened cost, a babel in administration, and unwieldy numbers. They should consider, the President further advised, whether the Council should sit in London Birmingham, Manchester, or any other fixed place, or move about as the Executive of the Ancient Order of Foresters, or fixed, as the Manchester Order of Oddfellows. If the Head Office was established in any town there would be fittings, which would be inconvenient and costly to remove. The General Secretary would have no certain dwelling place. Whitmore interrupted with the remark that Langley was trying to persuade the delegates against their will to take a certain course. This speech was interrupted by the rebellious mood of the assembly, and Langley asked to proceed.

Mr. Bass, M.P., he said, had expressed an intention of introducing in Parliament a Bill limiting the hours of railwaymen to eight per day. Here in itself was a reason for fixing government and Head Offices in London. There would be petitions and consultations, and if both were in London it would be an easier path. The debate swung to and fro, the battlegrounds being: The Executive to sit in London for one year, the next Delegate Meeting deciding the future; to be fixed in London for five years, and that general meetings be held as each Conference decided. "We have many friends in London" was counter-checked with "We have many friends in the country also." As a proof one of these had offered to pay the salary of the General Secretary for the first year. "That the Executive should sit in London," was carried by forty-two to nineteen. At this stage ten delegates were appointed as a rules revision committee, to report on the morrow.

The meeting proceeded with fundamentals, the next of which was "a sick fund to be or not to be." E. Huntington, of Newcastle, proposed the objects of the society should be "to render legal assistance to the members when necessary, to help them when thrown out of employment, to provide a sick fund, also a superannuation fund, for railwaymen generally, this to include death benefits, as well as assistance in case of accidents." Graham alone, who throughout the proceedings showed level-headedness, sounded the protective note as being the dominant one. The mover then amended his own

resolution so that sick funds should be optional. The weekly premium was fixed at 3d., the entrance fee at 2s., to operate from August 1st, until then 1s.

The Central Fund was to be 1d. per member, and Manchester chosen as the place for the next General Meeting. A superannuation of 5s. per week for life through old age or accident; after twenty years, 6s. Ten years was to be the qualifying period, the member to be allowed to earn what further sum he could.

The President was instructed to draw up and present to Mr. M. T. Bass, M.P., a testimonial of thankfulness from the railwaymen throughout the country, also requesting him to become the patron of the society.

A lengthy discussion ensued upon how the Executive should be formed. The clash of opinion was, twelve from the country and twelve from London should constitute the E.C.; another, an employé of each railway; the next suggestion, the division of the society into districts, the London part of the society to send sixteen men, the country twenty, making thirty-six in all, which, as it was a proposal by King's Cross, may have been an overture to ensure harmony. Following, twelve London members were advocated; yet once more was twenty-five its composition, twelve of London, thirteen country, five to be a quorum, elections half-yearly. It was ultimately resolved that the E.C. consist of twenty-one members chosen from the London postal area, and that any provincial member be entitled to a seat at the Council Board if provided with a credential furnished from the branch of which he was a member, such credential to bear the signature of the president, secretary, and treasurer of the said branch. It was also decided that delegates be paid their expenses from the General Fund, but unless representatives of the various branches were summoned by the E.C. proper no member was to be paid nor allowed to attend more often than once in three months. In any case, they must have credentials. Honorary members' fees were fixed at 10s. 6d. per annum.

The London and the country spirit swept the Congress often, and there were threats of separation and charges against the London men, but Langley, as he had done all along, preached the virtues of conciliation and concession. He had acted, he said, impartially between town and country, and if he had not pleased everyone it was because it was impossible, and if any had been neglected let them look at the vast duties of himself and Executive. He asked them to take long, broad views, to be kindly in action toward each other, and charitable in differing judgments. Dealing with the threats of secession, he said the existence of such a resolve was suicide. It was impossible to expect unanimity at first, if ever, and if there was a difference of opinion the minority should give way to the larger collective view. To withdraw from a society because you cannot have your way is childish and its consequences destructive, leaving them at the mercy of every petty tyrant. No union could be

possible if minorities seceded. On the Wednesday Grabbam wanted the two troublers of the Conference to express their regret for the discourtesy shown to Langley, and the President hoped they would not press the matter, but settle down to work. One of the South-Eastern delegates proposed that the Trustees should be elected each year, but the Congress would not consent. Mr. Climpson was re-elected Treasurer, and a Finance Committee of four appointed from Trustees and Treasurer. The President was instructed to draw up a resolution of thanks to Mr. Bass. He drew this up and presented it, and it was approved:—

“To Mr. Michael Thomas Bass, M.P.

“Respected Sir,—We, the undersigned delegates in meeting assembled, and representating the delegates in meeting assembled, and representing the members of the A.S.R.S. in England and Wales, unanimously concur in the desire to express to you our deep and heartfelt thanks and gratitude for your sympathy for the sufferings endured by the class to which we belong, and for the timely support and invaluable aid rendered by you in the formation of the society, which, we trust, may be the means of improving our social condition and protecting our rights and guarding us against injustice. The universal respect and esteem of railway servants throughout the kingdom will always be yours, and your name will be cherished among them as a household word and enshrined on their grateful memories. We therefore trust that you will allow us to inscribe your honoured name as the patron of the association which owes its existence to your fostering care. Earnestly wishing you better health, and praying that your life of usefulness may long be spared to us. We are, respected dear sir, your faithful and obliged servants—”

(The address was signed by about seventy names.)

After the Congress was over a meeting was held at Arundel Street, Strand, where S. Morley, M.P., took the chair, M. T. Bass, M.P., Douglas Straight, M.P., Canon Jenkins (afterwards President), Dr. Langley, Lloyd Jones (the Chartist, author of “Robert Owen’s Life”), George Potter (Editor, “Beehive”), Vincent, and others spoke. At the Delegate Meeting it had been decided that E. Phillips, the Editor of the “Gazette,” was to write the “history” of the A.S.R.S., for which the first balance sheet shows him as having been paid £10—the easiest £10 ever earned in A.S.R.S. literature, probably. It contains less than twenty pages—the size of our present rule book—and added is the report of the General Meeting lifted from the “Gazette.” The first auditors could find no receipt for this £10, but Phillips assures me he had it. The delegates were photographed on the roof of the building. How grandly hopeful were the speeches of that time! Its authors pictured a union in strength of numbers, in finance, in power, beyond that of any known combination; and if

their hopes had not been high and firmly fixed they had foundered in the dark days ahead.

At the public meeting, which was crowded, when those of the platform entered the room every man stood on his feet and cheered till the whole procession was seated. When Bass rose to acknowledge the compliment the delegates had paid him the men rose with him, and gave him the greeting due to the man who had fought so well for them. Addressing them in a kindly, easy tone he told them how grateful he was that his efforts had not been wholly unsuccessful, and gave them kindly advice as to the future, and whimsically said they had many friends, one of whom, he learned, was a lawyer who had offered to work for them for nothing, and (with a shrug of his shoulders) when a lawyer did that he always kept his hand in his pocket. Alluding to some of the charges made against him during his controversy with the Midland—one was that he officiously interfered between masters and servants—the first step he took was at the instance of a large body of his constituents, Midland railwaymen, at Derby. They had memorialised the directors in vain, and he consented to address them on the men's behalf. He could not make any progress until the question of overworking on railways was brought before Parliament. Then he stated to the House what he knew and had observed, that railway servants were frequently on duty three days at a stretch, and that some of them had not had a Sunday to themselves for years. It was, however, by a mere accident that the Midland was mentioned; it was used as an illustration. He had never meant to imply that it was more blameable than other lines. On the contrary, he believed it was not so blameable as some others.

Lloyd Jones moved: "That this meeting is of opinion that it is desirable for the security of the travelling community that the railway servants should not be overworked or underpaid, that it considers ten hours sufficient for the working day and that six working days ought to count as a week, and pledges itself to support the movement for shorter hours and increased remuneration." Canon Jenkins and others supported.

Another resolution was: "That this meeting learns with satisfaction that a society for the protection of railwaymen has been formed, and congratulates the delegates who have been sitting during the last three days upon the successful efforts to consolidate an association of national importance."

Mr. Bass wrote afterwards to the Secretary:—

"Dear Sir,—I beg to congratulate Dr. Langley and the delegates on the satisfactory way in which the Conference has been conducted, but at the same time I shall consider the movement a comparative failure until the society numbers at least 50,000 members."

One of the delegates wrote:—

“The Great Delegate Meeting. As one of those who was privileged to take part in the proceedings of the celebrated three-days Conference of railwaymen, I had an opportunity of noting everything that transpired at the most extraordinary meeting of railwaymen ever held. I was particularly struck with the intelligence manifested by everyone, and I could not but think that a movement headed by such men could not fail to succeed. Never, I should imagine, have such a number of able men belonging to the working classes gathered together to discuss various questions concerning their welfare as on that occasion. The society they have established will for generations have an important influence.”

Then he praised Langley for his conduct of the meeting, and severely condemned Jeffs and Whitmore for their insults to him, and he went on to refer to the rules:—

“Cordwell made his second speech with regard to this question, and then, with that eloquence and persuasive power at his command, soon turned the tide and brought the two sides equal, whereupon Dr. Langley gave his casting vote in favour of Manchester. The result of the election of the General and Travelling Secretaries gave me more satisfaction than anything else during the Conference. Mr. Chapman has conducted the business of the society in a most able manner. He has frequently been at work seventeen or eighteen hours a day, and after having done so much it would have been the depth of ingratitude for them to have removed him from the position of General Secretary, as well as unwise to have dispensed with the services of a well-trying and trusty servant. Mr. Graham has also been found to have well discharged the duties of the office to which he has been elected. Mr. Vincent has many claims on the gratitude of railwaymen, and some employment, I think, ought to be found for him, as second Travelling Secretary or something of that kind. The delegates from the Battersea Society said if Mr. Vincent had no official connection with the society the men he represented would withdraw from the society, whilst the delegate from Chester said if Mr. Vincent had any official connection with the society the men he represented would do likewise.”

Giles (Chester) said he knew all the time that the Chester men would stand by the union at all hazard, and he would very much like to see Mr. Vincent in some subordinate position, but not as General Secretary.

No sooner was the meeting over than King, of the South-Eastern Branch, one of the delegates who worked on the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway presented himself for duty, when he was told that he must see the superintendent,

who asked him if he had attended the Delegate Meeting. Replying in the affirmative, he was discharged, as was W. E. Campion, of Bermondsey, and S. Wyatt, Aberdare. It is very interesting to read the opinions of that day of the part Bass and Langley played in the early stages. One said that but for Bass and Langley the society would have obtained the fate of all others, so they had to thank Bass first and Langley second, and after speaking of its rapid progress said: "There can be little doubt that in a short time it will number 20,000 members."

For the good work Langley had done some grateful souls had urged that he should be the recipient of a testimonial, but here, as always, he showed his shrewd perception of men and things, and he wrote:—

"I beg of you and all my kind friends to abandon the idea for the following reasons: First, the supporters of the A.S.R.S. have already been heavily taxed by the entrance fee and delegate levy, and it would be painful for me to think of any additional taxation of the men who have made great sacrifices. Second, having a clear conviction that much of the success has depended upon others whose worth and excellence will be more known and appreciated hereafter, I feel that it would be a mistake to present a testimonial to any man under such doubtful circumstances, and would lessen his power for usefulness. I do not pretend to superhuman magnanimity, and am deeply grateful to those whose proposal was to do me honour I feel bound to be undeserved. Having worked for the society for the right, for right's sake, without reference to anything else, I find reward in the work itself."

To complete the appreciation of the three first earnest workers we have only to add that of the "Gazette" of Graham: "Mr. Graham, of Derby, is, we think, one of the ablest railwaymen we have ever seen." Their stars will wane, and they will go from among us, but alone Graham will stand foursquare always, one of the most practical, one of the most farseeing, a hard, unselfish worker, working on amid difficulties, with wages in default, subject at times to unreasonable and unseasonable criticism, which we see undeserved, as in the case when he sought a reform of the Great Eastern itself, believing that a reform of the system meant reform in Labour, and East Anglians threw letters at him in the "East Anglian Daily Times" and the "Eastern Daily Press" for meddling in what they thought did not concern him, but he went his way doing the work that lay at his hand ably and fearlessly.

Chapter VII.

THE SECOND STORM PERIOD.

WE have now to enter upon the period so full of dramatic happenings, the time of intrigues and dissensions, which must have wearied every ardent, sincere worker. For fellowship's sake they sought to tear each other to pieces, and to show their love for the society they almost killed it. If they were fond of union they took infinite trouble to conceal it. It is the first steps of a child which are difficult, but they had small regard for the little toddler, and were more anxious to show their part in its paternity than to guide it till its steps were firm. One of its features was the Vincent controversy; another was finance. In the first the protagonists were more for Vincent than the union, and the exaggerated statements of membership were responsible for a good deal. Things wanted doing, but they had no cash. Whilst his protagonists were crying "Vincent, Vincent," they had not enough money to meet their bills when they became due, and Graham had to borrow money from the branches to keep himself in work. The Executive and the General Office lacked authority. No one hardly respected the rules. The organisation was a rope of sand. The whole aspect was a sea of trouble. The refuge of lies as to membership brought its own Nemesis. The doings of the union or of men in the union from the first Delegate Meeting to the end of the Chapman regime, if put in all their startling nakedness, would require a book to themselves, and then have to be shadowed faintly in thin, light strokes. All these controversies wearied Mr. Bass, and more than once he threatened to withdraw advice and aid. He was a most generous helper. His advice was for the most part given by request, and only occasionally unasked, and then when danger became threatening. He wanted railwaymen to work out their own destiny, to cultivate the habits of thought, prudence, self-reliance, and self-help. For months he employed Greenwood, of the "Daily Telegraph," and paid him £3 per day, and the salary of Vincent was on an equally liberal scale. Disinterested soul as he was, he was troubled with the woes of the malcontents.

Less than a month after the first General Meeting, Langley reported to the Executive that he had received a letter from Vincent of a very painful character regarding his physical and financial affairs, and he asked if anything could be done for him by the Council, and at a later meeting a letter was read from Vincent in reply to

one from Langley expressing his willingness to work in harmony with the E.C., he preferring the post of an Organising Secretary. It was to be acknowledged, informing him that should he, when in London, think proper to attend a meeting of the E.C. his case would be considered, providing a week's notice was given to Mr. Chapman. Whitmore also wrote that at a meeting of delegates from Birmingham, Chester, Derby, Sheffield, Leeds, Sandiacre, Manchester, and Hereford, at which about 3,000 were represented, they proposed that Vincent should be employed by the Amalgamated Benefit Society, he being a man who had laboured to emancipate railwaymen from their slavery. The "Gazette," in its "Notes by the Way," said they were glad the E.C. was going to take into consideration the desirability of employing him, as there was an abundant railway ground yet unexplored; that Ireland felt the need of unity, whilst neglect had allowed a Scotch society to stake out a claim, when it was essential that all in the three kingdoms should be in one society, whilst at Carlisle and for twenty miles around, and on many of the lines of the West of England, the proud banners of the A.S.R.S. were as yet unfurled.

Vincent met the E.C. and stated his willingness to do what he could for the society, and agreed to be amenable to their discipline. Questions were put to him, but he refused to answer them unless he knew whether he was to be a salaried officer or not. Discussion was lengthy, and Vincent refused to answer questions on a second plea of lack of time. He was then asked to retire, and after a long discussion, they passed the following resolution: "That this meeting regrets the refusal of Mr. Vincent to answer the plain and straightforward questions that have been asked him, and considers it as a confession of his inability to do so, and we cannot open the question again." In a word, they were sick of Vincent, his vacillating methods and intrigues. Later it was reported to the E.C. that he was still opening branches of the society, and expenses were also asked for. The E.C. replied that he was acting without their authority, and they resolved that a notice be put in the "Gazette" that he had no connection with the society on account of his refusal to answer the questions put to him, and that his expenses must not be defrayed from the society; but at the same time they sanctioned a proposed testimonial to him. Meanwhile Grimsby, York, Barnsley, and Newcastle complained of his actions, and Vincent replied that he was sorry if he had offended them, and dealing with the questions put to him by the E.C., said they referred to things happening before the Delegate Meeting, and if he had been wrong in building up the society, why was he not branded with shame before all the delegates? But it seemed he was not to be allowed to participate in the proceedings of a society he had worked hard for; expulsion was to be the reward. He fully admitted having made mistakes, who had not, and surely Irwin and Shrivess, who questioned him so closely, would admit the same, and again

expressed his willingness to make the society a glorious success, and concluded with this advice to the opposition:—

“ If you should meet an erring one
Whose deeds are blameable and thoughtless,
Consider, ere you cast the stone,
If you yourself be free and faultless.
Example sheds a genial ray of light,
Which all do well to borrow;
First improve yourself,
And then improve your friends to-morrow.”

Whitmore still kept pegging away for Vincent, saying he had never listened to anyone who had spoken so clearly, so distinctly, or as truthfully as he. Faults! yes, but they were much more injurious to himself than to other people. He was asked by a member of the E.C. if he did not send a letter to Whitmore advising him to look out for squalls. If he had committed himself it was only what others had done, which letters show that Vincent and he were in constant correspondence. Whitmore, also the chairman of the Crystal Palace Branch, sent lengthy letters to the “Beehive” on the whole controversy. Langley also, who had made an extensive tour in the north, and was everywhere received with enthusiasm, reported a strong feeling for Vincent. They did not think he was fitted for the Secretaryship, but, taking all things into consideration, providing he would work in harmony with the E.C., something should be done for him. Shrives, having been pointedly referred to by Vincent, entered into the fray, saying that before Vincent came he was informed of the questions that would be asked him, and allowed to fix his own time for the interview. What was done was approved by Vincent’s warmest friends, who were still regretting his obstinate course in refusing to answer a single question addressed him unless first informed if he did so it would be in the position of a past officer, or one likely to be. The information asked for was based upon information which everyone knew. His reference to the Delegate Meeting showed this: Thirty-eight out of fifty-six decided to exclude him. The London delegates were twenty-two of the assembly, only six of whom voted in the minority. Shrives said he “was well aware that nobody was without faults, but it was impossible to forget, and anyone with open eyes could see that those who refused to go about the affairs of life in a straightforward and manly manner, though repeatedly warned by his friends, deserved whatever fate befel him. He was sorry for him in his painful position, but he had only himself to thank for what had occurred, especially when they reviewed the efforts made on his behalf by both former and present Council, and the writer, if disposed, might point to the fact that the society had been consolidated without his assistance at all—and he said it with pity—but in spite of his efforts to throw it into a state of

disorganisation, which was a reason why his services were not required."

This led the E.C. to publish a report of the matter; they had taken the precaution of having a shorthand report of the interview. The questions were: (1) Why did he not apply for the General Secretaryship according to the directions contained in the "Times" newspaper? (2) By whose authority was he invited to be secretary for the Midland Counties and Birmingham District? (3) Why did he not work in harmony with the E.C. when travelling through the country, as promised in January last? (4) When he addressed meetings at Grimsby, Hull, York, and other places why did he still refuse to acknowledge the E.C.? (5) Why, after the twelve county delegates had met the London representatives, did he still refuse to acknowledge the London Council? (6) Why did he instruct the men at Barnsley, Newcastle, and Hull to have nothing to do with the London E.C.? (7) What prevented him making an application for the General Secretaryship between the 27th of April and the 10th of June. (8) Why did he state that he did not see the advertisement in the "Times" of May 20th, when Mr. Penzer, of Wolverhampton, and Bladon, of Birmingham, called his attention to it? (9) Why, after all these things had taken place, did he accuse the E.C. of dealing unjustly with him? (10) Finally, why, if he ignored the advertisement in the "Times," and the authority of the person to whom the application had to be sent, did he not send a communication to the "Gazette," stating that he intended to become a candidate for the General Secretaryship?

They were read over separately and again put to Vincent, when he put the question as to his being a past or future officer. The Chairman pointed out that the matter was entirely one of fact, and he could either admit he had made a mistake or vindicate himself. To this, he complained of the time he had to wait downstairs, adding that the Council had only to say that they would have nothing to do with him and he would turn out. Why, if the questions were incorrect, he could easily have exposed their falseness; if true, admitted his error and promised future amendment. They admitted his work whilst in the employ of Bass, and regretted he did not comport himself more judiciously. The accusations are seen to be facts by Vincent's own writings, in his constant railing at the London men, who gave the society a name and a legal status. Also, in his gleeful references to Langley's imprisonment, as shown in a later page, and his sarcastic commentaries. Nor does he in his writings answer the mystery of the non-application for General Secretary, saying, "It is a matter for autobiography." Only a few really wanted him, and they were persistent, and others, thinking it would conduce to harmony, because the bitterness of the question percolated into everything and wrought confusion, accepted him. The E.C., however, divested themselves of authority and referred the matter to the branches: (1) Shall Vincent be employed as an Organiser? (2) Upon what

conditions shall he be employed: (a) Amount of salary, (b) what travelling expenses, (c) if any allowance to be made for board and lodging in addition?

Whilst this was going on Vincent again applied to the E.C., describing his physical, domestic, and pecuniary difficulties, when, after a long discussion, they referred it to his branch—Excelsior, Birmingham—with a view to inquiry being made and relief afforded if matters be as represented. They also read a letter from Whitmore of an extraordinary character, which caused much laughter, when it was resolved that it be filed. The next E.C. meeting received another from him, when they decided to waste no time on him. This same Whitmore published in a newspaper a letter written in vindictive bitterness against Langley. The matter was carried into 1873, when the E.C., complaining of the lapse of time in the branches not sending in return of the Vincent queries as to employment, appointed a scrutiny committee, who reported, though before they did so the branches were again written to urging a reply. The report said that only eighty branches had reported. Over sixty had sent in no returns, and they discussed the matter from 7-30 till midnight.

The E.C. were in a cleft stick. Those who had voted were urging the matter, and the E.C. were urging those who had not voted to vote. The following is a copy of the scrutineers' report: "We, the undersigned, having carefully examined the documents and vouchers relating to Mr. Vincent being engaged as Second Organising Secretary, find thirty-seven branches unanimously in favour of Mr. Vincent being employed, twenty-one against, three for leaving it to a delegate meeting, two for leaving it to the Council, and six neutral; total voting, eighty. The aggregate votes for the eleven divided branches are: 235 for, 102 against. Taking them separately, we find nine of eleven give Mr. Vincent a majority. Therefore, the question stands thus: Forty-six branches are for Mr. Vincent, twenty-three are against him, three are for leaving it to a delegate meeting, two to E.C.; neutral, six. Clear majority in favour of Vincent, twenty-three branches."

An accident occurred on October 2nd at Kirtlebridge, on the Caledonian, and in the collision twelve were killed and many injured. The stationmaster who was accused was overworked, being on duty sometimes till 2 o'clock in the morning. Langley, knowing its importance, had asked Chapman to promptly send Vincent to make inquiries, and the E.C. met specially and ordered him there, adding that he was "to act strictly under the order of the Council." Chapman neglected to act, and when Langley found that he had failed to carry out instructions, after the loss of nine valuable days, he wrote Vincent:—

"50, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W.C.,

"October 11th, 1872.

"Dear Sir,—I instructed Mr. Chapman, the General Secretary, to send to you last night by wire, and to remit you

by post. To my great annoyance, I found that he had not done so this morning; and I have expressed a very strong opinion upon his negligence. I fully rely that you will have remittance by this post. May I say that, to some extent, I place my honour in your hands in this affair? Success will be useful to you and most gratifying to me; failure will be disappointment to both. For the sake of all parties concerned, let this undertaking be carried out in a manner beyond reproach. You may rely upon my support in the matter, and I trust you will not feel hurt by anything I have written.

"I am, yours faithfully,

"J. BAXTER LANGLEY."

Vincent went promptly, and did splendid work, because it was in such matters that he was at his best, being a veritable sleuth-hound, which every inquiry for Bass or others proves, and as a result Currie, the stationmaster, who had been charged with manslaughter, was acquitted. He was not a member of the society, and a voluntary defence fund was formed. Another section had promoted a testimonial to him. Birmingham made him a district secretary. The testimonial did not reach much over £30 in all, but, as Whitmore said in the "Beehive," having got his foot in the society he would crowd his whole body in. He eventually became a district secretary for Birmingham under authority.

During all these times finance was a trouble; in fact, Vincent, finance, and strife were all mixed up together, acting and reacting upon each other. Maidstone wanted the General Secretary to go down. "Yes, if you pay him," was the reply. The General Meeting had ordered a history to be compiled. The price was fixed at 2d., but was later made 3d., and was long delayed for lack of money, on so small an item. An unauthorised strike had taken place at Broad Street, and though the men were wrong in striking they wanted to help, and so Langley lent them £250. They made a levy of 1s. for it, but it came in slow, and was insufficient to provide the emigrators amongst the defeated men with passage money, advanced on a promissory note to repay, which few did. Many took Cardiff's attitude and refused to pay. "Resolved that Mr. Graham's bill be settled if sufficient funds are in hand" is one resolution. Nine Elms asked for money, and were bluntly told they had none; they had spent without authority, and must pay on their own, and when the Finance Committee had saved money in the rule printing contract they were thanked. Moss kept writing them for financial assistance for the Kirtlebridge case. Branches did not pay for goods, and they kept reminding these branches that in order to secure cheap goods they had to pay cash, and would they please send money along. The E.C. saw not only a lack of cash, but inaccurate bookkeeping, and thought a Finance Committee desirable. They appointed a rota, and that failed, because the members did not



Chas Russell Vincent

turn up. They appointed a permanent one, and soon they were in conflict with Chapman, whose financial methods were very primitive and never knew just where he was. Shrices read its first report, and as there was some difference between the two it was resolved that they should confer together and give the result at a future meeting.

Owing to the hopeless muddle of accounts they wanted to resign, but the Committee said stick to it, and smoothed them over with a vote of thanks for their arduous labours. Bowles was engaged at 30s. a week, and he was a failure, and time and again they had to call Graham back to straighten things out. He considered the books unsuitable and obtained better ones. Shrices, who was a real watch-dog in finance, brought up a resolution to reduce pay of E.C. The General Secretary kept on telling them he could get money for neither dues nor goods. Some branches had never paid a penny for goods since formed. It was suggested that such be blacklisted in the "Gazette." Climpson, the Treasurer, who kept supplying money of his own to tide over, also wanted to resign. They pleaded with him to stay, and he consented. In January, 1873, there was £700 owing for dues. Stratford had designed an emblem, which was accepted by them, but they had no money to execute, and so Boon, Bull, and a printer got it out, and that, too, made trouble. They worked together for a time, then the printer advertised himself as the sole proprietor; the other two did the same; then they hung together, because there was a danger of them being hanged, each of them separately.

At one meeting the General Secretary produced a liability and asset sheet. There were sixty-six branches owing money for goods supplied. Dues showed only £710 per annum, of which £600 was required for officers, £50 for rent, coal, and gas, and other things which produced on the liability side £730, or £20 more than the income, leaving nothing for expenses of Committee, delegates, legal advice, postage, and stationery. Meanwhile, the branches were clamouring for the 1872 balance sheet. So the Committee of Finance were to report week by week. The branches forwarded to Head Office just when they would. To E.C. exhortations they scoffed and remained uncharmed as to duty. Illegalities were rife, balance sheets were returned for correction, and they then refused any money whatever, and the E.C. took it lying down. "Send parcels by train," said Chapman; "'tis cheaper than postage." Graham had an empty pocket.

"Swansea,

"October 27th, 1872.

"To the Chairman and Members of the Executive Council.

"Gentlemen,—For some long time past I have been subjected to great inconvenience through not being able to obtain money to carry on my work with, and have had to resort to borrowing from the branches which I visited. I found that there was rather an unwillingness on the part of the branches to lend me money;

and I also found that suspicions were being entertained as to whether the society was in such a flourishing condition as I represented it or not, so I resolved to abandon this system of borrowing, and wrote to Mr. Chapman, as the Head of the society, to that effect, pointing out to him that unless I could have the 'wherewithal' to proceed with I should be obliged to remain idle. On Friday I received £2, just sufficient to last me until to-morrow (Monday), with an intimation that I must not be too expectant, as funds were low. I open a new branch here to-day, and to-morrow I go to Derby, there to wait until something can be done to provide me with funds.

"I also received on Friday a resolution passed by you on Monday last: 'That the expenses of Mr. Graham, O.S., and charged to the society for board and lodging be disallowed' !!! Now, I find that almost all agents of firms are allowed second-class railway fare and second-class hotel bills. But I need not look at any outside firm or even Trade Union, for, if I remember rightly, the delegates present at the first Delegate Meeting were allowed second-class railway fare and 12s. 6d. per day for expenses. And I find that a standing rule of the A.S.R.S. is, 'That any member delegated on the society's business, whether at the Delegate Meeting or otherwise out of the limits of his own branch, shall receive 12s. 6d. per day for expenses, and second-class railway fare in addition.' Here am I, whose duties are one continued delegation, charging the society third-class railway fare and the lowest class of expenses, averaging about 3s. 6d. per day, disallowed everything but bare railway fare. If the expenses submitted by me were allowed, my situation would then be worth about £2 per week, and I should only lose the comforts that are attached to a settled home; but if the resolution in question is acted upon, I shall find myself in receipt of about 20s. per week, minus the companionship of those to whom I am attached, etc., etc.

"Such being the case, I would ask you to reconsider the resolution you passed on the 21st inst. If it is rescinded and my expenses allowed, well and good. What I believe to be the spirit of the rules and the intention of the members of the society will then be carried out; but if it is confirmed, there will be no alternative for me but to seek other employment. I already have to 'put up with' the many inconveniences arising from being among strangers, and would make more sacrifices if necessary. But considering there is no necessity for such a step to be taken as that indicated in the resolution I am unwilling to submit to it.

"Awaiting your reply,

"I am, gentlemen, yours most obediently,

"JOHN GRAHAM."

They gave satisfaction to Graham.

When bills were presented they said in resolution, "Pay as soon as possible." Chapman looked after No. 1 and took the cash for his wages as it slowly filtered in. Branches dissolved and divided the funds, and the Trustees made no sign. Langley, as we have said, had lent them £250. Wyatt, as we shall see later, lent another £150. Bass gave and kept giving; Stratford was recalcitrant, and Bedford even worse. This was the dark hour in a rough sea.

As if that were not enough, men were pelting each other with a not too well chosen vocabulary. "Dispense with the Organising Secretary," said some; "Reduce or dismiss altogether the General Secretary, with others." That was their idea of reform—reformation by death. Looking back forty-eight years I am inclined to think the Labour gains from the companies saved the breaking up. Those gains were substantial, and the tears in the voices of the companies' chairmen were many. They gave figures. None of the malcontents had that charity "which suffereth long and is kind." Their speeches spit fire, and their pens were steeped in gall. The Broad Street strike accentuated all evils then existing. But Langley, with his clear ideas and forcible pen, put things as they were, showed causes and effects, and outlined what ought to be done, and that no section should commit the society to a strike without universal consent.

Manchester, the best managed and best organised of any part of the kingdom, was doing splendidly. Not the right or the wrong of the striking did they consider. They waited not for levy, but promptly sent £100. Indeed, Manchester was the steadying and rallying part of the whole United Kingdom. So bad was the spirit prevailing that the E.C. had to hoist an S.O.S. in the "Gazette," itself an indiscreet thing: "Notwithstanding the great fact that the A.S.R.S. is a great success, there are, it seems, men connected with it who endeavour to oppose and render useless the exertions of the principal members of the union. This is much to be deplored, and we cannot too strongly condemn the persons who play a part so detestable. The promoters of the society have had immense difficulties to contend with, but, thanks to the ability and energy displayed, they had all been satisfactorily overcome. Lately, however, another and very serious obstacle had been thrown into the path by the introduction of several men to the E.C. whose constant thought and entire aim seem to be how best to secure the disruption of the society. They oppose every proposal brought forward by the promoters of the union, not from the strange idea that they are doing right, but solely, it would appear, in a spirit of opposition to everything done by or connected with gentlemen who have been chiefly instrumental in bringing the society into its present state of prosperity. We do not know what they themselves think of the possible results of the course they are pursuing, but as men who pull down generally endeavour to build up, we suppose their opposition to the existing order of things has a dim notion if they could succeed in breaking up the society of constructing some sort of organisation in its place. That it would be

immeasurably inferior to the Amalgamated there cannot be the slightest doubt, because the failure of the present society would discourage and dishearten railwaymen generally, and they would hereafter neither place their faith in themselves nor their leaders. The railway servants would therefore do well to exclude from the E.C. all persons who exhibit the dangerous tendency to destroy, and they should send men there to deal with affairs who are ready and willing to act with their comrades."

At the following E.C. Langley read a letter from Jeffs, of Nine Elms, of a very insulting character. Much indignation was expressed that the learned President should be exposed to such attacks, and it was stated that it was not the first time he had been subject to similar insults by this person. A vote of censure was passed on Jeffs, and an apology demanded. He replied with an equivocal one and they asked for an unconditional one. West, of Brick Lane, also had insulted all. It should be noted that Nine Elms and Brick Lane were wholly Vincentites; Battersea, in part. West's conduct was such that the Council refused to have him with them, when the branch proposed a vote of confidence in him, and would send no one else; and if the E.C. persisted in its decision, so the deputation said that were appointed to wait upon the E.C., the branch would secede, and other branches with them. After that it went to the branch again, and Gwynne, of the E.C., and Whitmore, of Battersea, were present. Gwynne contended that he had said nothing amiss, but his words were: "As long as this Council governs in accordance with the wish of the majority of the members I will remain a member of it, but as soon as you ignore the opinions of a majority of the members, no longer will I remain in the union, but would retire and inform the branches of my reasons for so doing." The E.C. had also started a proposal for a general labourers' union, and this incensed a further section, and there was further trouble, which they quieted by saying it was only put forward for discussion. West, however, did not take his seat till well into 1873, and then only after a full apology. They solemnly resolved to publish all the proposers of the resolutions and their reports, so that members might know what they were doing, with this weakling. "That should any further exhibition of party feeling be displayed at the Council meetings this Council is prepared to resign its position as a governing body, and to recommend the branches to convene a Delegate Meeting to elect another E.C., as the Council looks to its members for their confidence and support in a resolute determination to sustain and conduct the society's affairs to a successful issue, in spite of the attempts to make mischief and confusion and to obstruct the legitimate business of the society." And it was further decided that only one member of a branch should sit on the E.C.

Graham warned them that general dissatisfaction was expressed at their conduct, and Chapman also advised them to turn over a new leaf. But the discontent grew. Chapman's inability to conduct even correspondence and the pitiableness of finance were seen, and the

Finance Committee drew up a report, to be presented at the General Meeting to be held at Manchester in June. Langley was at one with them, and the evils of Chapman's work were apparent everywhere. Manchester, which had done so well, was itself faced with a strike of its lurrymen, and the E.C. gave no lead, and only niggardly supported them. It was like the Broad Street strike, a rush one, and it failed, though Cordwell did succeed with the agricultural labourers who were engaged to take their place, and turned them back. It broke up the strongest branch in the society by declining membership, and Stratford took the premier place.

Again the Delegate Meeting was faced with the question of dirty linen, and had it been an effective laundry it might have done better, but as a matter of fact Chapman was re-elected, whereas had they but allowed the London men to present their case, or had not also Dr. Langley refused to preside, they would have known more than they did. The bitterness against the London men was largely in ignorance and undeserved. At a meeting held at the City Arms, Bloomfield Street, Langley put his position before the meeting at length. He felt, he said, that his name was not his own property, but the property of the public at large, and it must be understood that his decision to resign was final and absolute. There was no other course left for a man to take who wished to preserve self-respect, and he had no alternative but to say to the railwaymen that if they intended to go their own way there was nothing left for him but to separate himself from the movement. It was because certain principles he held dear had been attacked that he took this resolve. The society was being conducted in such a manner that would end in its destruction. Treachery flourished on all sides and disloyalty in all quarters. There were many things that were decided at the General Meeting in London that were highly injudicious, and which would not have been decided if the society had been in existence ten or fifteen years, but with regard to the errors made at that meeting he, of course, shared the blame and responsibility. They were in a wretched financial condition, and fettered with resolutions they could not alter. Moreover, the Executive was too large. It had twenty-one members, all of whom wanted to make a speech on every motion that was before them. There was never anything proposed by a member without someone was ready instantly to oppose it. He found himself in the position of a captain of a ship, the men of whom would do nothing but what they liked, and whose first mate would not attend to his instructions, and he therefore thought it best to terminate his connection with such a crew. In addition to this, he happened to say on the Tuesday night to some Parliamentary friend that there would be no strike at Manchester, and saw in the Wednesday morning's paper that a strike had actually taken place, and that by the sanction of the Manchester district of the society.

The speech was printed and sold by Shrices at 9d. per dozen, but it was too late for the General Meeting. As soon as the Delegate

Meeting opened they dealt with Langley, and not a disrespectful word was spoken of him. They knew his difficulties, they appreciated the work he did, and he was telegraphed again and again to come down and preside. They sincerely wanted him to do so; in fact, they wired him every day. He gave eleven reasons why he declined to be President, and when the last wire went they had re-elected Chapman, the only other candidate being Bowles, Vincent and Chapman having by private correspondence settled the matter, that the interests of each lay in each keeping the job he had—district secretary with Vincent, General Secretary with Chapman. When the last wire came to Langley he wired back: "Final decision: Take no part in the affairs of the society; re-election of Chapman is the cause," which looks as if the dominating point in his eleven reasons was Chapman, who was really the seat of most of the trouble, his blundering incompetence being patent to the Executive. But the countrymen knew little, being in touch with none of them, only as rumour carried the matter, because the Executive were London. The consequences were that the Executive got the credit for the bad deeds done, whilst the good passed unnoticed, because there was no dispute about them.

The Manchester General Meeting, with the able advocacy of Evans, who came to the front here, proposed that the society should be divided into eleven districts, with a secretary to each, the design being, first to spread authority over the provinces, and by so doing segregate London, the district secretaries, with two others from London, to form the Executive Committee. It may seem a very primitive method, that the servants of the society should be the judges of its own deeds. It was open to innumerable abuses, but, all things considered, it was an excellent remedy for the then distress. It was costly, but made for stability, and ruled out London as a dominating force, broke down by separation the warring clans of London itself, because it was not so much London against the provinces as London divided against itself. A Sub-Committee mapped out the eleven districts, and it was agreed to with very little alteration.

AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF RAILWAY SERVANTS.

DELEGATE MEETING,

RAILWAY CLOCK INN, MANCHESTER, JUNE 27TH, 1873.

A resolution having been come to that the government of the society should be changed, and consist of representatives of each district, it was essential that the country should be apportioned out, and that the necessary alterations should be made to coincide with the principle invoked in the resolution.

A Committee of seven was appointed to report on the alterations, etc., necessary.

The following is the report, which was unanimously adopted by the Delegate Meeting.

JOHN DAVID JENKINS, D.D., *Chairman.*

REPORT OF DISTRICT COMMITTEE.

Rev. Chairman and Brother Delegates,

Your Committee, after most serious reflection, recommend to this meeting of delegates that the following measures be adopted in the interest of your society:—

I. We consider it necessary to divide England into eleven districts, which shall be apportioned as follows:—

FIRST DISTRICT (Northern).—Carlisle, the centre, to extend south to Lancaster, west to Whitehaven, and east to Kirkby Stephen.

SECOND DISTRICT (North-East).—Leeds the centre, extending north to Berwick, south to Barnard Castle, east to Hartlepool, and west to Huddersfield.

THIRD DISTRICT (North-West).—Liverpool the centre, extending south to Oswestry (exclusive), east to Warrington, north to Lancaster (exclusive), and west to Holyhead.

FOURTH DISTRICT (West-Central).—Manchester the centre, to include Crewe, Blackburn, Wigan, and Longwood, and all the district comprised between these towns.

FIFTH DISTRICT (North-Central).—Sheffield the centre, extending east to Gainsborough, north to Barnsley, south to Derby, and west to Buckstone.

SIXTH DISTRICT (East-Central).—Boston the centre, including the district situated between Hull on the north, Gainsborough and Newark on the west, Huntingdon on the south, and the sea coast on the east.

SEVENTH DISTRICT (Central).—Birmingham the centre, extending north to North Road, east to Leicester and Nottingham, west to Shrewsbury and Craven Arms, and south to Tewkesbury, and Oxford exclusive.

EIGHTH DISTRICT (West).—Pontypool Road the centre, extending north to Welshpool, west to Aberystwith, south to Bristol Channel, and east to Tewkesbury exclusive.

NINTH DISTRICT.—Bristol the centre, comprising Gloucester, Swindon, Salisbury, and the country westwards.

TENTH DISTRICT (North London).—Bounded on the South by the river Thames, extending north to Bedford, west to Oxford, and east to Yarmouth.

ELEVENTH DISTRICT (South London).—Bounded on the north by the river Thames, and comprising the country east of Southampton.

II. Your Committee also recommend the following mode of working the districts:—

That each district shall elect a president, vice-presidents, and secretary, and have a working committee of eleven members.

The duties of this district committee will consist in deciding all matters affecting the branches in the district; and all branches *joining* the district will be subject to the control and jurisdiction of this committee.

Branches not satisfied with any decision of its district committee can appeal to the Executive Council, but *must* comply with the decrees of the district committee until such time as the Executive Council pronounces its opinion on the case.

The election of members to sit on committees shall be in this wise:—

In the first instance, each branch joining the district shall elect one of their members as their representative, who will hold office for twelve months. Out of these representatives eleven shall be balloted for, three of whom shall retire quarterly and the vacancies filled by the other representatives, either by following in alphabetical rotation of the branches or by ballot, as the branches may see fit.

The president, vice-presidents, and secretary will be chosen by the votes of the branches throughout the district.

The district committee shall meet at least once each month; first in the centre named in the report, and afterwards at whatever place shall be decided on by each meeting of the committee, making it a movable committee.

Each branch to be allowed to nominate a candidate for the office of Executive Councilman, three of whom shall be chosen by ballot; the one of the three who receives the largest number of votes throughout the district shall be elected to the office.

III. Your Committee suggest that the amendment now before the meeting, i.e., “That 3d. per week be the entire contribution of each member, and that one-third, or 1d., of that amount be devoted to cover every working or management expenses,” be adopted.

We have therefore 4d. per month for all management, which we suggest be apportioned as follows:—

1d.	to be devoted to the General Management Fund.
1½d.	„ „ District Management Fund.
1½d.	„ „ Branch Home Management Fund.

We are firmly of opinion that this will meet with the approbation of the members, and will take away a source of much discontent and confusion from our midst, while it will make the payment equal on all members.

We would also remind the meeting that as a consequence of forming the society into districts and dispensing with the Organising and Assistant Secretary, a saving of £500 per annum has been effected to the General Management Fund. The 1d. per month, or one-twelfth, of entire contribution will not only meet the expenditure of the General Office, etc., but also be sufficient to form a Reserve Fund to be applied

to superannuation purposes, or to the relief of any district requiring help.

Each district or branch sending a representative to the Executive Council shall bear the attending expense.

IV. We recommend that the present Executive Council be retained till October 1st next, when it shall give way to the new form of government.

It shall also be the duty of the present Executive Council to push forward the formation of districts, so that the new Council may meet by the time mentioned. We also recommend this to the earnest consideration of every branch.

The Conference itself was a turbulent one, Canon Jenkins presiding. He had a thorny task, and slept little and could scarcely eat. Each night he would visit Cordwell and others to sound their views as to manner and method of getting through. Beads of perspiration ran down the old man's cheeks, and the burden of that meeting must have helped to shorten his frail life. It is seen they left the old Executive to continue their work till October, this being June. Lack of funds was one of the themes of discussion at the Congress. Some of the branches had some curious notions of pay. With reference to the officers, it was suggested in one agenda proposal that the General Secretary's salary should be £150 per year; another £3 weekly; or £250 and he to provide his own assistance; a £120 after July 1st. It was proposed that a district secretaryship should be tacked on to it, whilst one motion was that he be dispensed with altogether, and that the district secretaries perform his duties. A strange medley of discordant sounds. In the district divisions London was divided into two, being bounded by the Thames.

For district secretaryships they came out: South London, Graham; North London, W. Bowles; Sheffield, E. Harford; Birmingham, Vincent; Bristol, F. W. Evans; Leeds, Lunn; Pontypool, S. Wyatt; Manchester, J. Cordwell; Liverpool, J. Collinson. Districts were exceedingly expensive, and the pay was small, and they one after another abandoned their task. Harford went into employment in some ironworks; Graham went to the office. Harford wrote at that time: "I cannot get the branches to send their share for this district. It is starvation work, and I heartily wish myself back again on the M. S. & L." In less than a month after the Congress things became worse than ever. Chapman was going from bad to worse. He had neglected to write letters he had been instructed to write to Macarthur, M.P., and others concerning the safety of railwaymen. His finance was in a hopeless tangle, and this Congress, not knowing it because of their prejudice against London, re-elected him.

The London Executive then suspended him, and it has to be remembered that the Congress had censured the Executive, and they, in retaliation, whilst power was still with them, refused to carry out the instructions of Congress, and refused to acknowledge Canon

Jenkins as President, and even ordered that his name be removed from the advertisements of the society. Canon Jenkins wrote Vincent:—

“Aberdare,

“July 25th, 1873.

“My Dear Vincent,—Our position is difficult and critical. There is no power in law to suspend the existing constitution and its meeting weekly. There is, likewise, no power in law to prevent the new constitution in October. Each acts under the authority of a Delegate Meeting. In case of great emergency it would be needful to go to the expense and trouble of another Delegate Meeting. Meanwhile get all the districts formed as quickly as possible, with their secretaries and delegates, and I will gladly meet them for mutual counsel. I shall be very glad to hear from Mr. Cordwell and to know the state of the district. I am at the service of the society in any way. I shall be glad of your suggestions.

“Ever yours truly,

“JOHN D. JENKINS.

“P.S.—On no account publish the resolutions, nor let any hard word be used.”

Underground methods and Vincent were thoroughly at home, and he set about it, and it was suggested that in some way the Executive should be dissolved—but how?—that was the crux, as they were acting under Congress authority, the supreme body. So they plotted for a raid, and the district strings were pulled secretly and very efficiently. Cordwell wrote Vincent:—

“I have now very great pleasure in submitting to you the resolutions passed by the Manchester District Committee at their meeting yesterday. Valuable correspondence from yourself, Sheffield, Leeds, Wolverhampton, and other districts has come to hand, and I have suggested that you should continue the work and arrange for the time of meeting in London. The Rev. Canon Jenkins was present at our meeting, and the following copies of resolutions passed: ‘That this district committee have no confidence in the present E.C., inasmuch as it is not conforming to or carrying out the resolutions of the Delegate Meeting. We are of opinion that a provisional E.C. should be appointed as soon as possible to act until October 1st next.’ Resolved: ‘That our district secretary attend London on Wednesday next, August 6th, as our representative, and to act only for our district.’ I do hope when we meet we shall be unshaken and free to act as circumstances may point out, and be able once more to steer our craft out of the troubled waters and press on to success. The thanks of the society are due to your district for the laborious work it has undertaken in this important and vital matter, and I hope you will convey from the Manchester district to yours mutual wishes for its continual prosperity.”

These letters sufficiently show the plot being worked. Here a curious coincidence happened which helped the plotters and assisted in saving the society. Shrives, as Chairman of the E.C., had convened a meeting of the E.C. for August 6th unknown to the provinces. The provincials had also fixed August 6th to make their raid on the London offices, and seize the reins of power. It was unconstitutional. The only legal way was the calling of a Special Delegate Meeting under the rules, but that was expensive, cumbrous, and delaying. What had to be done had to be done quickly, so the plot was carefully laid by inter-communication. The provincials met the day before, as arranged, at the Raglan Hotel, Martin-le-Grand, in the afternoon of August 6th and arranged with scrupulous care all possible contingencies. Each one who had to speak and act was arranged. Canon Jenkins refused to help in this part of the proceedings, but they arranged that he should be Chairman of the meeting when it took place. There was no doubt as to its issue, because the provincials were in a certain majority; the only question was how best to do it. The really surprising thing is, that the Londoners took this illegal action quietly; but they did. One can only assume that the best spirits of the Londoners were equally anxious to wind up the old government and start a new one; conscious of its own impotency, Langley, notwithstanding his refusals to take office, was still adviser to the E.C., he being wishful to prevent them committing suicide and wrecking the society.

Evans was the dominating force at the meeting. It was agreed that Canon Jenkins should take the chair. As he was the President there could be no objection to that. The minutes of the previous meeting of the London E.C. were read, but they were not confirmed, it being decided that it was not legal, as only seven members had been present, which was not a quorum. Standing Orders were suspended. Evans objected to Graham being present, but it was resolved that he stay. Shrives asked upon what authority the meeting was constituted. Chapman stated that, considering the actions of the E.C., he had felt it his duty to summon the meeting, as per Rule 9, page 6, leaving out the fact that it was others and not he who arranged it. It was, however, resolved: "That the meeting as at present constituted be competent to transact all business." The first duty was to set the Chapman suspension right, so Evans moved: "That the representatives of the society do recognise Mr. George Chapman as General Secretary, he having been elected by the Delegate Meeting in Manchester." In moving, he said any objection against Chapman should have been raised at the last Delegate Meeting, and started raining blows upon the E.C., when Jenkins reminded him that they had met to investigate, not to censure, and asked whether the legal advice taken with reference to the meeting was that of a barrister. It was considered to be authoritative. Evans could not get away from the E.C., and condemned their conduct in respect of Chapman, and said the effect of it was that those who voted

against him at the Delegate Meeting were now here to support him, and *vice versa*, which was an extraordinary phase.

Shrives asked whether any report from the Committee appointed to investigate the affairs of the General Secretary was in the hands of the meeting previous to election of General Secretary, or whether any statement was made at the meeting at all. (Interruption). He protested against being interrupted. He had listened to the other side without interruption, and had a right to expect the same courtesy to be extended to him. He begged to say that the business of that election was not conducted in the manner that such should be conducted. Everything should have been stated openly. He found that the Committee had not reported when the election took place, and he commented on Mr. Chapman having written a private letter to Vincent, as he did. The Chairman reminded the speaker that the election was the act of the delegates, and that Mr. Chapman, worthy or unworthy, was elected by them. Shrives retorted that if they had nothing to do with the conduct of Mr. Chapman during the present year there was no occasion for the present meeting. The Chairman answered that the E.C. had suspended Mr. Chapman, and the country men disapproved of this being done. Camden said the Delegate Meeting had only power to pass resolutions which were in accordance with the Act of Parliament, and if other resolutions were passed the E.C. had a right to object. He protested against members coming to that meeting with their minds made up. It had been said that no objection was raised at the Delegate Meeting, but he (the speaker) did so, and he was howled down. He attempted to speak later, but in vain. But they did not wish to hear why the Council had suspended Mr. Chapman; it was not because the delegates had illegally elected him. (Interruption.) It was because of his treatment of the letters received from the railway companies and the setting at nought the wishes of the E.C. Curiously enough, the raiding E.C. afterwards declared Chapman's election illegal and null and void.

The Chairman interrupted with the statement that they should accept the vote of the Delegate Meeting. Wolverhampton said: "If the Camden delegate was not allowed to speak at the representative meeting he must have been in the minority," a curious expression from a liberty-loving people. A majority carries its way, and if a majority rules out the speech of the minority it is tyranny, and a minority of one may contain the wisdom of an assembly. The Aldgate delegate said he had resigned from the E.C. and was no party to its action. Broad Street regretted that representatives should attend there with their minds made up, and also regretted the treatment of the late President, who had sacrificed so much for the society. (Interruption.) Jenkins gave it that Dr. Langley's name was treated with great respect at the Delegate Meeting, and that should always be the case. He deserved that at the society's hands for the good work he had done. Broad Street continued to say that the E.C. was virtually on its trial and should, therefore, be allowed to defend its actions. The

Delegate Meeting should not have suppressed the report sent from the E.C., which would have greatly influenced the meeting. It was the duty of the E.C. to make that meeting acquainted with what had taken place during the year. The Rev. Chairman pleaded that in consequence of the amount of business to be performed certain things had to be left out, and that was one of them.

Shrives moved an amendment: "That this meeting, having heard an account of the General Secretary, do appoint a Committee to inquire into the same and report thereon, such report to be submitted to the society for its decision." He moved it on the ground that the General Secretary was incompetent in the first place to deal with correspondence, and in support of his motion he would mention the Manchester correspondence with regard to the strike as a case in point, also certain errors were discovered by the first Finance Committee, and that to obtain certain particulars they had to read through the correspondence, because nothing was booked up. There were also certain resolutions in the minute book which had never been acted upon, and he considered it the duty of the Secretary to see that the minute book was always cleared.

Cordwell said that Mr. Chapman must remain till October, and if incompetent the Council would make short work of him. Shrives mentioned the matter of rules, the price being a case of extravagance. Chapman had shown party spirit and had refused to give information concerning the discrepancies in the Annual Report. He, as Chairman, was asked to send this to the Delegate Meeting, which he did, but it was not considered. He considered also the act of detaining letters belonging to its public meetings most discreditable, and the railway-men had suffered by it. Battersea, who seconded the amendment, objected to the Secretary doing as he liked. Cordwell suggested that the matter stand over till October. New Cross said a Committee had gone into the matter of the General Secretary at Manchester, and nothing could be done now. Crystal Palace and Bow thought they had heard sufficient for the appointment of the Committee, and the amendment was lost by four votes.

With the preponderant provincial vote this vote showed that some of the provincials had been converted, and they were hearing facts for the first time. Londoners and provincials were separated in thought and action, "an' never the twain did meet," not even at a Delegate Meeting. Evans, in reply to the original motion of a dissolution of the government till 1st October, said if Shrives could prove what he had stated it would be very bad for Chapman. The legality of the election of the General Secretary had been called in question, as was also the fact of Mr. Chapman writing privately to Mr. Vincent at Manchester. He maintained that Chapman had a right to write privately to whom he chose. As to going against an Act of Parliament, the Delegate Meeting could do so, even if it threw itself outside the pale of legality, and if Chapman was incompetent, why did those who put him forward before the first Delegate Meeting in London do so?

He hoped all this would be dropped, and they all work for the good of the society.

The resolution was carried by a majority of six. It was resolved: "That the conduct of Mr. Chapman be left to the new E.C." Cordwell, because a majority of branches had lost faith in the E.C., moved: "That the Council be adjourned till October next, and that the business of the society be transacted by the President and the Secretary in the interim." Shrives moved an amendment, adding after the words "General Secretary" "and a Committee of five, three to be a quorum." In support, the Londoners knew what the Council had done during the year; the countrymen did not. The London men had an equal right to make their voices heard, and up to the present they had not been heard. He could prove his assertion. Were the whole history of the Council laid before the members he felt sure they would have two-thirds in their favour. The contention was in consequence of the minority having to obey the majority. (Here the minor London section interrupted.) He and others had no cause to be ashamed of their conduct, and judgment should not have been formed until both sides had been heard. The General Secretary said he had received resolutions from fifteen branches condemning the Council. Evans, in reply, said the Council had never done any good, and he should not have known of its existence but for what he saw in the Press. The original motion was carried by nineteen to ten.

This is a brief history of the countrymen's raid upon the old Executive, and its dissolution. Why London submitted to this illegal act is a mystery; but they did. It also shows how sublimely ignorant the country was of London's doings, and for Evans to have said he should not have known it but for the Press accentuates that lack of knowledge. But he soon was to know, and this knowledge led him into the arena for General Secretary, because of the extraordinary incompetence of Chapman. He partook of the tree of knowledge, and his eyes were opened, and he saw that unless Chapman was ousted the society would be on the rocks; and that London and Langley had done well; and he sought the helm of the ship. But this raid meeting, which lasted till midnight, brought real facts into view. Getting such, a real remedy is possible. Not that dissension ceased. They carried it still further—London held public meetings; members wrote letters in the Press. Here is one letter to the "Gazette" by "A Unionist." The writer is unknown, but from my intimate knowledge of Pilcher it seems not unlike him:—

"To anyone it will be no matter of surprise that the society does not make much progress in the Metropolis. The useless controversies kept up by the different sections are enough to destroy any society professing to have unity for its base. The persistency with which some members keep their particular grievances to the front is astonishing. One could almost believe that the society had nothing else to think of but their personal disputes, or that they continued it for the notoriety which their

egotistical conduct assured to them. What is still more astonishing is that many London men are content that their best interests should remain uncared for to take sides in these miserable squabbles, so that the society appears to be upheld for the pleasure thus derived. I really think we have had quite enough of such work. It is no use to preach unity and the good it does when our central district is the very opposite of united action, by looking at which you feel that the hardships suffered by railwaymen are due not to the directors, but their fellow workers, who prefer quarrelling instead of helping one another. I trust that common-sense will soon prevail, and when our London friends find a member doing mischief constantly they will put the rule into force which authorises them to expel him for an endeavour to break up the society."

A meeting was also held at the Winchester Arms, when the old sores were reopened, and where it was said that the General Secretary had introduced cliquism and consequently squabbles. The Twickenham delegate made a naïve confession that he was present when the General Secretary was suspended. Since then he had been informed that the action was illegal. Such being so, he did not know what to do.

The London E.C. had not failed for lack of meetings. They met on June 5th, 1873, at 7-30, also on the 9th, 13th, 16th, 23rd, and 25th. Then between that and the next Chapman had been re-elected by the General Meeting. They met again on July 7th, 10th, 14th, 21st, 28th, and 30th. They had suspended Chapman on July 28th, dismissed him on the 30th, but as there was not a quorum it was declared illegal. The raiding delegates hailed from Pontypool, Wolverhampton Nos. 1 and 2, Reading, Leeds, Manchester, Boston, Birmingham, Sheffield, Bristol, Liverpool, and Carlisle. This information is in Evans' handwriting, on the flyleaf of my 1874 balance sheet, and goes on to say: "Summoned in accordance with Rules 5 and 9, Council sat until (this was the raiding night of August 6th) 11-49 and reinstated General Secretary and" And then the half-leaf is torn off, but that it contained information is evident, because the matter is carried over the next leaf.

When the first meeting of the new E.C. opened, following the raid, Evans was not present, but he wrote, giving sound advice, and stating that any decision arrived at respecting the General Secretary would be accepted by him. If he was found to be at fault he must bear the blame, as he did his utmost to secure the re-election of Chapman. The first item of discussion was the balance sheet of 1873, which they had never been able to construct owing to the tangle of Chapman's finance. A motion was passed: "That Shrives do explain." Graham thought that some explanation was required respecting the errors pointed out by the auditors with regard to the balance of the first Delegate Meeting. What had become of the difference between £15 2s. 11½d. shown by the Committee and £40 14s. 5½d. balance shown by the auditors? Shrives said the auditors in publishing the names

of the Committee should have included Chapman, who was one of the Committee. With regard to the money, he never saw a penny of it. All the Committee saw was amounts entered on loose sheets of paper. The General Secretary had no books. He could not say how the error of £18 11s. 6d. was accounted for. They dealt with the papers as they found them, and they could not say where those papers were now. The Committee found a total income of £362 6s. 5d., and the auditors did the same. The Committee never saw any money, and if the money said to have been paid had not actually been paid it must be in the hands of the branches and the General Secretary. The Treasurer said he was £6 or £7 out by the transaction, and they had no reason to doubt him. Birmingham thought they must let the error of £25 11s. 6d. pass.

At this meeting the question of an orphanage for the children of members killed on duty was for the first time discussed. The meeting went into the Chapman affair and saw as in a mirror his amazing incompetence. He hesitated, equivocated, and lied; gave it out that Shrices had written that he preferred no charge against him, which Shrices denied, and set them out. Evans, though not present, now knew what he knew not before—the difficulties the London men had to contend with. He had been writing in the "Gazette" "Jottings from the West of England" and other articles on "The Future of the Society." At that time, which was after the Manchester strike, which hurled that district from its high position in business ability and membership, the Bristol district rose to be the best in the society. Marked business ability, clearness of action, and increasing membership were seen. The district made a presentation to Evans of a library table and chair, with a purse of gold, with the inscription: "Presented with a purse of gold to Mr. Fred W. Evans by the members of the A.S.R.S., Bristol, June 22nd, 1874." The secretaire, or library table, was a handsome one, made of mahogany, with a green console top with the inscription. Mrs. Evans was presented with a gold watch and chain, on which were her initials and an inscription.

The "Gazette" three months before had said: "Mr. Fred Watkin Evans has, since the formation of the districts, acted in the capacity of an unpaid secretary, and by his exertions has increased the number of members in this district from 300 to 1,800. In addition to this he has taken an active part, if not more than any in the whole society, and it is to his exertions and ability the society owes its strength and influence. He has carefully watched and nursed the interests of railway servants generally, and by his advocacy of their cause has brought upon him the displeasure of his employers, the G. W. R., who, to show the sense of his personal worth to the society, whilst readily admitting his ability as an officer, have decided upon legally discharging him from their employment, thus hoping to remove him from the district." Then it drew attention to the advertisement of the proposed testimonial, which was signed by W. R. Long, Secretary, Alexandra House, Upper Easton, Bristol; H. Scott, G. Greenwood, J. Jones, W. Kirby, W.

Harris, E. Hunt, A. Williams, C. Carew, W. Briggs, J. Bennett, and T. Noreman.

Watkin, the chairman of the M. S. & L., had stood for the Parliamentary constituency of Exeter, and Evans had interviewed him with reference to a Compensation Act, and getting a satisfactory reply threw himself into the contest. Watkin failed. Again in its "Notes of the Day" the "Gazette" puffed Evans in exceedingly flattering terms. A letter was written by Langley to the "Gazette" headed "The Old Executive," as follows:—

"I should not have ventured to intrude my pen in your columns had I not expected some other correspondent would have noticed the resolution passed at the Liverpool district meeting. The resolution is an important one, and I venture to call attention to it again: 'That the General Secretary be instructed by the district to summon the offending members of the old London E.C. to appear before the new E.C. to show cause why they should not be expelled the society.' I think it most desirable that this resolution should be pressed, because if the discussion at issue can be fully and fairly carried out it will end the power of faction and put the blame where it really lies. Before an E.C. fairly and legally representative of the separate lodges (who cannot be brought up to support foregone conclusions) I should feel bound to appear with 'the offending members of the old E.C.' and to use my influence to secure justice. I should have full confidence when elected representatives of districts would deal with it in an impartial spirit, and by a wise decision settle certain matters, which will otherwise continue to be grounds of disunion and consequent weakness to the society. But to secure the result it must be understood if 'the offending members of the old E.C.' can show cause why they should not be expelled, and, in fact, they were not the 'offending' parties, the parties who have been their accusers wrongfully should be turned out of the society, no matter what their position may be. It is vain to hope that the matters to which I refer can be suppressed. They are a permanent source of danger, discontent, and party feeling. To vote down the discussion is simply to damn up the stream which accumulates force till it becomes destructive. I refrain from imputing blame to anyone, but I hope for the permanent good of the society these questions may be fairly and finally settled, not by a catch vote, but a searching and impartial investigation, and with such a view lay the whole affairs before some well-known public accountant, as an impartial judge, to report to the E.C. in January."

Evans wrote in reply:—

"No doubt every reader of your journal has noticed the resolution in question, and with wise discretion treated it with silence, which proves their desire for all past disputes to be forgotten. The resolution, which means anything or nothing, ought never to have been entertained by the district after the vote

passed by the E.C. in October last. Who are the offending members, and in what have they offended? The resolution does not inform us, and is therefore an enigma to me. Does it refer to the whole Council? If so, who is to be its judge? By a coincidence Dr. Langley advocates the fulfilment of the resolution and the reappearance of the *old Council*. The South London district passes a resolution to the effect that the old Council should meet the new one. I am sorry to have to differ from Dr. Langley and the two districts, but my experience, based upon the last twelve months' experience, is that no possible good can come of the discussion asked for. It is not asked for by the strength of the society, which has decided to allow this vexing and interminable dispute to rest for ever. As an E.C. man I feel it would be a blow to our now prospering cause if the short time available for serious work were wasted in a discussion which has never failed to produce rancour and discord among members and threatened the very life of the society without satisfying anyone engaged in it. No E.C. has a right to judge its predecessor. A Delegate Meeting is the only tribunal to judge. The opportunity for having justice done was presented to Dr. Langley in June, 1873, but he refused to connect himself with the society, though repeatedly requested by the delegates to do so. Am I not then justified in asserting that the opportunity has been wasted by his refusal, and is it not useless to rake from the grave those bones of contention which were so nearly the ruin of the society? I hope I have spoken impartially, as I feel no personal interest in the matter which is a dispute between a few individuals, and I am without connection with either, but with each as a brother in a common cause. A discussion of counter accusation breeds contention. I venture to suggest that instead of considering charges of a personal character in the future, but when such things occur, let the E.C. appoint three, whose duty it shall be to examine witnesses. More truth can be gained in an hour than in a day's discussion."

Even the October E.C. failed to come to grips with the question of Chapman. Evans, as we said, was not present, which may account for it, but Shrives complained of the General Secretary having wasted the funds of the society, paid accounts not due, neglected to pay tradesmen for goods delivered. "Accounts not due" is a curious phrase, if bills were rendered. Such is but a fragment of the difficulties of the pioneers. The next E.C. is dealt with in the succeeding chapter, interrupted by the scrutiny for General Secretaryship.

Vast material has to be omitted which concerns that period; of the foundation of the Scotch Society, and an illuminated address presented by the Bow Branch to Langley, in reply to which he laid down sound rules of action, gave some of the encountered difficulties in the rough passage to then, and how he praised others for the splendid work they did amid discouragements which would have disheartened and even killed workers less inspired and energetic.

During this year Elgood and Son were appointed solicitors, which post they held till Belfast A.G.M., 1890. For brevity's sake also the splendid articles of Evans and his general writings have to be excluded. The "Beehive" of that year also published the vitriolic scorn of Whitmore and others about Vincent and the internal affairs of the society, in which such sentences as these appeared: "Insane speeches, the wild and wicked devices . . ." "have brought much discredit upon the society" of "the feelers which were thrown out in the *little pennyworth of last week*," meaning the "Gazette," with sneers of Langley's tours in the north, and this mixed metaphor: "If it is, the axe, which is now at its full height, will be brought down with a sufficient force and vengeance to sever three-fourths from the parent stem" and the "ever-to-be-feared gentleman." Much more to the point was a criticism by the "Beehive" of some of the "Gazette" articles, especially one that recommended two sections. This was in a leader: "Railway servants and their friends: We have no disposition to question the intention of the 'Railway Service Gazette' in the advice it undertakes to give to the A.S.R.S., nevertheless doubt very much the success of the advice and the fitness of the spirit in which it is given. Its recommendations of two sections, or practically two societies instead of one, is just that kind of recommendation those friendly to the union should never make. . . . There is no reason why the Railway Servants should split into two societies any more than into a dozen. All splitting and dividing is bad, and efforts should be in the opposite direction, even when the most formidable obstacles render the attempt difficult even to danger." Then it is sprinkled with a few of the Editor's epithets: "It may be right for the Editor to repeat the vulgar and ignorant abuse of respectable journalism, but the truth should not be sacrificed to pander to prejudice, nor should an advocate of working men's claims charge fellow workers in the same cause with the entertainments, sentiments, and sympathies they themselves utterly repudiate, and which are never to be urged against them but by their removal. We do not pretend to advise, but we have no hesitation in saying that the course taken by the Editor is as foolish as it is mischievous." There is also buried in the columns of the "Standard" a long letter from Phillips, the Editor of the "Gazette," which, if it were true, would damn it for ever as a fighting force. The "Standard" had in large type an intimation of a general strike at Christmas, 1873. Phillips wrote a column showing the wickedness of the thought, and made the society a friendly one rather than a union.

During July, 1873, a by-election took place at Greenwich, for which Langley stood, the figures for which are as follows:—

Boord (Conservative)	4,525
Langley (Liberal)	2,379
Sir John Bennet (Republican)	324
Boot (Conservative)	27
Coningsby (Liberal Conservative)	27

Langley was a candidate in the General Election in 1865, in which there were five candidates for the two seats, and Langley only obtained 190 votes, being the fourth on the list, the highest vote being 4,499.

Langley was in favour of Home Rule, and had Isaac Butt, M.P., Sir John Marks, and other Irish speakers on his behalf. No Conservative had been returned to the Boro' since the success of Peter Holt in 1852. Professor Beesley wrote that the workmen would not cease to urge their claims though 650 Boords were returned, and that workmen had come to the conclusion that they were ground between the upper and nether millstone of Toryism and Liberalism, and he wished for a third party in every constituency. "It had sounded the death-knell of the Liberal Party." Such prophecies are not uncommon.

Chapter VIII.

THE RAIDERS "HOIST WITH THEIR OWN PETARD."

WHEN the provincials raided 25, Finsbury Square, and turned out the London Executive and installed themselves, taking the reins of government, it was a dramatic moment in our eventful history, which was only the beginning of still more dramatic events. The year that followed was tense with happenings. The position was reversed; the accusers became self-accused. They had turned out a body that had suspended a man, and they soon saw that instead of breaking their power they should have strengthened them with both sympathy and aid. What swam into their ken astounded them. At every point of vision was trouble. They made efforts to unravel the Chapman finance. They employed Dubois, an accountant, who made confusion still more confounded. Not only did he make things still more inexplicable, but he presented a bill for £65, and when they did not pay—not so much that he had not done the work they set him to accomplish, but that his charge was excessive, and the chest where money should be was empty—he took legal proceedings for recovery, and finally compromised for £55, and paid his own legal costs. To Chapman's financial sins were added also lack of initiative in matters relating to the Royal Commission then sitting, neglect of correspondence, bungling at every point. Lack of vision, of system, of ability, was everywhere apparent—and had they not reinstated him, and turned and rent the men who had seen, felt, and knew? They had the merit of candour, and Evans was their voice, and in Evans, the one man of outstanding ability among them, was their hope, and "recent events" showed them, as well as him, that the only way to save the society was to send the General Secretary adrift. Chapman must go. They wrestled insistently with difficulties, but the more they wrestled the worse they grew. It must be said they bravely faced them, but "The bed was shorter than a man could stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower than he could wrap himself in it," and so much so is it that at this time there is a short period when every record is missing, which shows the confusion, and adds to ours, and we have to step backwards and look forward to piece together the broken strands.

It was as if the vessel was in Arctic seas, ice-bound, and every aspect seemed to make efforts hopeless. Never in our history was candour made plainer by words or deeds. They found that in adopting the rôle of reformers they had bungled and undertaken tasks the nature and extent

of which they were unaware. But they were not cowards. For what they thought Langley had more recently done as being likely to injure they expelled him, only to find, as we shall see, that he was heart and soul with them. They had not known what he knew, did not see his aim, were unacquainted with his line of thought, and the very men who expelled him, Cordwell and Evans especially, admitted error and atoned for it, so that henceforward, when the wrong, to be detailed, was righted, Evans had no firmer friend, no wiser counsellor, and Evans told them so with all the bluntness of speech of which he had immense capabilities, and Langley, who was as generous in forgiveness as he was wise in counsel, took the outstretched hand of Evans. Every aspect of that time shows that Evans was concerned with no personalities. He reversed opinions with candour, shifted his point of view when he saw it was wrong, destroyed the work of his own hands when he saw it had waxed old and useless and only fit for the dying. Not one word or deed shows that Evans wished to checkmate Chapman in order to crown himself as king. His love for the society was a passion, disinterested and free, but "recent events" had shown him, as it had others—Phillips, Bass, and the new reformers who had turned out the old reformers—that it needed one capable of leading them out of the morass into which they were plunged.

We have seen that he was not present at the first E.C. meeting after the *coup d'état*, but at the next two he was, and his strong personality swayed events and made decisions. We left the October E.C. as breaking off to learn the scrutiny for General Secretaryship. They went on their way without Evans. Bass expressed a wish to see him, and he wanted to visit all the old branches of his district, for which he had acted as district secretary without pay, and had raised it to the most efficient in the list of districts, Manchester excepted, and he pleaded for a month's grace, and that Chapman should continue to act till then. It was agreed to. The meeting of the E.C. started again, first of all deciding that any E.C. men who were late each morning should be fined 1s. Langley had written for the return of the loan of £200 lent two years before, asking that the Treasurer should be authorised to repay him. It was deferred. Among branch matters, Birkenhead explained that their district secretary had decamped to Canada with the district money, and should they or the Central Office bear the loss? The Office decided to take the responsibility and prosecute "should an opportunity occur." They quibbled about 14s. expenses that Graham had incurred, though previously they had said his expenses were a marvel of cheapness, his work disinterested, and markedly efficient, being shown in one fact that he only charged 1s. for opening a branch. Tonbridge Branch had collapsed and divided among themselves the funds, pleading that Chapman had so advised them, which he denied. Bedford would send no money till the Manchester strike fund was cleared up. Coventry decided in the same way. The Liverpool branches in all the district objected to sending any more dues till they had an

account of what had previously been sent, and it was said that those who complained most were those who had paid no dues at all for 1873.

Forty-three branches owed £45 10s. 11½d. for goods, and they had no money. So poor were they that in a petition for the Royal Commission they had decided that the signature should be honoured with one penny each to pay for the cost of printing. Burslem had paid their premiums to the secretary, and he had not handed them over to the treasurer, and had decamped with the money and had been heard of no more. Kidderminster had broken up, but wanted help to restart. Leamington were threatened with legal proceedings. The officers of the branch told Chapman to do his best or worst. Camden were eighteen months in arrears with their dues, and yet they grumbled because they had to pay their E.C. man for his attendance at the E.C. because the Office had no money to pay him. In a resolution they bemoaned the fact of being unable to issue a balance sheet for 1873, for the double cause of lack of money and that a hundred branches had not in this ninth month of 1874 forwarded their balance sheets. Moss wrote to know why he was no longer their solicitor, and wanted the names and addresses of the E.C. men, which Chapman had sent, saying that Elgood, of Lincoln's Inn Fields, a near neighbour of Langley's, had been appointed on Langley's recommendation, and that the resolution was in Langley's handwriting. There was a storm at this; but it is a sidelight on the internal strife. Standing over against Langley's £200 debt was another £200 owing, and they looked into an empty till.

Kipling, in a striking poem with the title "If," has shown us how success or failure is bounded by an "if"; and the Chairman tried to relieve the gloom by showing "if" they calculated a membership of 20,000 it would, with the ordered sum paid to Office, give a yearly income of £1,083 6s. 8d., and after paying the General Secretary's salary would leave upwards of £800; if 25,000 members, £816; 30,000 members, £1,087; 35,000 members, £1,357; 40,000 members, £1,628; a piece of useless arithmetic which Vincent extended, the calculations being a harmless, if useless, piece of pleasantry. So Wyatt offered to lend them £200 at a small rate of interest, which they fixed at 3 per cent. He was thanked, and they accepted £150, thinking they would struggle through for the time being on that. He waved off the thanks, saying the money would be as safe as if in a bank, as he had immense confidence in the future of the society. The Trustees and Treasurer were asked to accept this and stamp the agreement, the stamp duty to be paid out of G.O. funds. The Emigrants Fund, which had made an advance of £6 to each emigrant of the unfortunate Broad Street strike fiasco, was advanced on a promissory note, to be repaid by them. Sixty of the notes were missing, and the fund to meet it had failed. These were some of the things Evans was faced with when he took office.

Before he was elected he had written articles on "The Future of the Society," in which he mirrored with clearness every difficulty that confronted them, marked out with exactness every abuse, pointed out with equal clearness all the bright prospects, with jot and title set out, and inspired confidence. Dark as the hour was he pointed to the dawn, if the members would only come to heel, and the governors govern. He asked for power to deal with recalcitrant members and branches, asked for loyalty, goodwill, and hard work, and having written for some time in the "Gazette" "Jottings from the West of England" sang his swan note: "The writer of these jottings is, by the desire of the A.S.R.S., to remove from the West of England to the 'East of England,' and residing there would not be in a position to continue writing of the 'West,' but hopes to be able to write of 'All England.'" And he did in clean, clear, and strong sentences that he who ran might read. In one of the articles on "The Future of the Society" he wrote, speaking of the forthcoming Delegate Meeting to be held at Bristol—called "Delegate," because an annual one had not been fixed. He wrote of the experience gained by the formation of districts at Manchester on his proposition of "Dividing the country into districts and governing the society through the agency of those districts was adopted, and though a radical change from the then constitution has proved successful and has doubled the numerical and financial strength of the society, and by dividing the responsibility of the government between the branches, has made members take more interest in it and so increased the usefulness of our association, but while much success has resulted from the district scheme, the measure of it has fallen below the expectations of those who drafted it, and we have now got to a standstill, for while new members are continually joining, others drop out, and we only hold our own."

Then he deals with the good work done at length, and suggested to the General Meeting a change. "True, we are yet young, but old enough to have done more. Our organisation is yet incomplete, and as a first step to completing it confidence should exist within the camp, and the causes remedied and the details of management so arranged as to give the society a fresh impetus and more strength. Such is the task of the General Meeting." He suggested reducing the districts to six. "Whilst speaking of the E.C., it may be observed that objection is raised to district secretaries acting as councilmen, on the ground that they are paid servants of the district and may work in their own interests. It cannot be too well known that in the present E.C. district secretaries act as councilmen, but in such cases, I believe, against their own wish. They are elected by the districts to represent them, and unless the members trust them they should not elect them, or, indeed, employ them at all. The solvency of the society should not escape attention. Whether the society can continue to be properly managed and offer to the members the same benefits it now holds out to them for the same contributions as at present is a thing I much doubt. In the past a number of men, say, 20,000, have paid money into the

society and then fallen out of the ranks, leaving the others the benefit of their money, and since its establishment the prosperous state of trade has saved the society the call on its funds which will not be experienced in less fortunate times, when the companies find it necessary to decrease the working expenses by diminishing the number of employes, and, moreover, for some time to come, the call for superannuation allowances will not be felt, but in a few years hence these will form a serious item. I do not consider the present accumulation of funds any indication that 3d. weekly can meet the calls that will surely be made by and by, or that the society is solvent in view of the future obligations. One superannuation will swallow up the weekly contributions of 3d. Centralisation of funds is regarded with jealous feelings by many branches, the members of which desire their funds to be retained by themselves under their own ken. With every deference to this feeling, I safely assert that those members most conversant with the working of other trade societies are convinced that our society is powerless as a united body without a central fund immediately available, and our efforts will ever be confined and sporadic but futile struggles of separate branches; but swiftly deposited in one place with that of other branches is more safe and more useful than that which is deposited in the various local P.O. Saving Banks. The chief obstacle to centralisation is mistrust of each other, and if this mistrust always continues the society can never be made a means of united action. Guard the fund (if established) from every possible abuse, but do not from feelings of mistrust deny yourselves the power of decisive action, if necessary to your own interest. To meet wishes a sick fund might be established—optional, scale low.

“One word more. It is essential that means should be found for enforcing obedience to the rules of the society; that the rules should be respected by being obeyed. Unless this is done, both rules and E.C. had better be dispensed with altogether. Without discipline we are a disorganised body. Nothing can be more injurious to a society than to have branches and district committees coolly selecting for approval those rules and decrees which please them and resolving to ignore those not in accord with their pleasure, imagining they are justified in so doing. This has been repeatedly done, and it is for the Delegate Meeting to prevent a recurrence in the future, or the society can never be efficiently managed or retain the respect of its members. Where there is a difference of opinion, the minority must comply with the wishes of the majority if organisation or government in any shape is to exist, and without these two essentials there cannot be a society worthy of the name. Whether I am present or absent from the Bristol meeting I sincerely hope the results of its deliberations will conduce to the greater welfare of the union, and through it to the improvement of the railway servants of Great Britain.”

This, from a man who had allowed his name to go forth as a candidate for the General Secretaryship, was, in the then state of the

society not calculated to win him votes with some; but they are the views he always held, and which he urged with persistence unwaveringly.

We now go back to the October E.C., 1874, when Evans had been elected, but did not take part in it after election. The E.C. then decided on the constitution of the Delegate Meeting. Three representatives from each district, which were then ten, and each branch to be allowed to nominate a candidate according to rule; and that a previous resolution, that the E.C. should form a part, was rescinded. Then they gravely passed a resolution that they would enforce rules, and also make a levy to meet the expenses of the delegation; but they could not estimate what it would bring, because in the absence of information they did not know how many members there were in the society. They then proceeded with reports on the Royal Commission, furnished by Graham because it was out of Chapman's depth, and to the consideration of a circular which had been issued by Langley, which in a previous E.C. they had decided exceeded the power conferred upon him by the rules as honorary member, and requested him to resign his position. It surely is the longest resolution that was ever entered in the minute book of the society. The circular had dealt with the past and the future.

Resolved: "That this meeting, having carefully considered the circular issued by Dr. Langley, and the accountants' report, is of opinion that the Council has exceeded the power conferred upon it by the rules in requesting Dr. Langley to resign his position as honorary member for the following reasons, viz.: Dr. Langley had a perfect right to issue a circular explaining his reasons for resigning the Presidency, and the Council cannot derive any authority in this case from the rule relating to the issue of the circular. Dr. Langley did not issue the circular with a view to breaking up the society, consequently he cannot by rule be called upon to resign. This meeting denies that asking for an investigation into differences already made public could have any injurious effect upon the society whatever, and the ground for asking for an investigation was made patent at the last meeting of the Council, when the accountants' report was received. The items that had been called in question, first the issuing of the circular and afterwards by the London district's account of £25 11s. 6d. in the Delegates' Expenses Fund, which the accountants admit to exist, and he remarked: 'He cannot say whether any steps have been taken to charge it to the proper party,' and as he passes on without doing so, the deficiency stands as before. . . . Respecting the differences of £29 7s. 2d. in the income of the Strike Fund, and the loan of £25 13s. 8d. to that fund from the General Secretary, the accountant said at the meeting that he had no authority to go through the strike account, and that he had gone upon material supplied him by the Auditors. The same material naturally produced the same result and caused him to presume, as the Auditors did, that the General Secretary had advanced £25 13s. 8d., that amount being required to make the

cash book and the strike committee's statement agree. This stands to reason without any evidence being adduced to the contrary. The London representative was not present when this account was examined, and the accountant appears to have had authority to check only the expenditure of that fund. At the last meeting of the Council the General Secretary, in his explanation, said that statement was prepared in 1872 by Bull, Boon, Shrives, and himself, and they all agreed with the exception of a few shillings. This was the fact, and the balance then arrived at was brought to debit by the General Secretary and worked upon as being correct, until the Auditors' report was presented, June, 1873, when he was credited with an additional sum of £25 13s. 8d., which had never been heard of before. Notwithstanding the wishes of the London districts for a thorough examination having been frustrated by the accountants' authority having been limited to a partial investigation while retaining their original opinion as to the differences referred to in Dr. Langley's circular, they are willing, in the interests of the society, that the matter should now be allowed to drop; but they respectfully call upon the E.C. to rescind the resolution of July last calling upon Dr. Langley to resign his position as honorary member of the society, and only regret that the Council did not at that meeting allow bygones to be bygones."

We must suppose that the drift of this lengthy resolution—if such it can be called—was to place the matter on record, which could not be done in a speech, and as that E.C.'s proceedings were to be published in pamphlet form it would attain their object the better, but the bare reversal of the E.C. decision is given in the minutes. The mover said he trusted the resolution showed the circular was not uncalled for, the statements had foundation, that they would see they had exceeded their powers in passing the resolution, and that this serious bone of contention would now be removed once and for ever; and that as they had commenced a new era all would work in harmony in the future. The resolution of resignation had been a great detriment, and was establishing a bad precedent. Dr. Langley had been proved to be a good friend to railwaymen, and he was still doing his utmost for them and all Labour. Cordwell wished to say, as mover of the offending resolution, that he was perhaps labouring under a different opinion now than then, and advised oblivion to the whole subject. His chief reason for moving was that Dr. Langley had written the London district branches telling them they might do what they thought fit about dividing the funds and recommending them to defy the Council. The one who told him had since declined to substantiate his statement, and he had seen all the tissue copies of letters that Dr. Langley wrote, and they were the reverse of what he had been told. Boston said the resolution had been a damper one, and all with the exception of Wales supported the highest expression of goodwill to Langley, though two others would not consent to rescind. It was rescinded by six to three. Then a resolution was passed, that Chapman send it to Dr. Langley, and he replied that he would not; and one E.C. man

sarcastically told him, as he lost no time in forwarding the original resolution he ought to be prompt in sending this. So Camden moved that if Mr. Chapman would not forward, Mr. Bowles be appointed Secretary, *pro tem.*, till Mr. Evans could assume the duties of office. They decided to audit Secretary's accounts to time of leaving. Chapman also declined to fix the official stamp to Wyatt's loan, but Phillips afterwards gave personal guarantee.

This resolution of rescission was not, however, the end of this miserable squabble. The Rev. E. Collett, who had a curacy at Longton, Staffordshire, and afterwards moved to Retford, was an honorary member of the society, and has many good deeds to his credit. He espoused the cause of a man named Edwards, who had suffered through railway tyranny, and warmly advocated the circulation of the "Gazette," and later became, for a time, its proprietor, issuing a circular to meet Langley's. No better instance could be afforded of the old adage of fools rushing in where angels fear to tread than this misplaced adventure. He had been much better employed in preaching a lesson from Proverbs, chapter 20, verse 3, than refanning the embers of a dying controversy, and which all who had the interests of the society at heart wished was dead. He issued this circular, and when Dr. Langley complained of his lack of courtesy in not sending him a copy, pleaded that he had lost his address, when from Langley's popularity "Langley, London," would have found him, to say nothing of the society's Head Office or the office of the "Gazette"; but some men very wise in divine things are exceedingly simple in the elementary facts that govern life. A Stratford member made a protest against it, also one of the Retford members, and A. Holland, the E.C. man for Nottingham, who wrote:—

"As the circular from the Rev. E. Collett is becoming the cause of much alarm in our district will you permit me to ask, not only for my own but for many of my members' information, from whence has that gentleman got his authority to take such steps, or what is his connection with the society? I do not doubt his intentions are pure, and I will admit that his sympathetic and earnest effort is much needed by railwaymen, but I have not yet forgotten the lengthy and warm discussion of our last E.C. respecting the circular from our Vice-President, Dr. Baxter Langley, though being looked up to at that time in the branches, and not allowing it to be read till the E.C. had passed a resolution to the effect that it should be entertained. Dr. Langley may not be all things to all men, yet we cannot doubt his exertions and usefulness to our society in the past and at the present. Can we deny him the right his position as Vice-President gives him? If the E.C. alone had power to tolerate a Vice-President's circular containing his well-wishes to the members? I ask where is the right of the gentleman referred to to issue a reply to the branches and the members whom I have the honour to represent on the E.C., and to allow the Rev.

E. Collett's circular to come to my members only through the proper channels."

Mr. Collett wrote:—

"East Retford.

"(1) I was not aware that any 'authority' is necessary to empower me to communicate by letter with any person or persons whatsoever. (2) That as one who has taken a deep interest in the society I am of opinion that no consent, official or otherwise, is necessary to render me competent to address its members. (3) That if any connection is necessary I have a sufficient one in the position of honorary member of the A.S.R.S. (4) That any discussion that may have taken place in the E.C. with any person on any previous occasion cannot interfere with the right of any person to reply to Dr. Langley's circular, if he feels disposed to do so, and send his communications to whoever he pleases through the medium of the post. (5) That Dr. Langley was perfectly well aware of the rule respecting circulars, yet he sent his own out without consulting the E.C. I hope most sincerely to get the consent of that body, but so anxious was I to do what I could to help the men in their movement that I deemed it inadvisable to wait until the next E.C. meeting before sending out my circular. I have worked, for the most part, among those in my immediate vicinity hitherto, and it is no love of publicity that has now induced me to address the railwaymen of the kingdom, but a sincere endeavour to assist them. A few words respecting Stratford's member. I really think he should have perused my circular more carefully before writing to you. He says he knows the late President well enough, and so on. That has nothing to do with the matter. I discuss *facts* in my circular. I ask no one to accept my *opinions*. As to reviving bygones, one of my objects in issuing the circular was to deplore the extent to which Dr. Langley had referred to bygones. No one should say that I have stirred up these matters. I have merely issued a reply.

"Yours obediently,

"E. COLLETT."

Holland replies to Collett:—

"In his reply to my letter the Rev. Collett gives five reasons or grounds why he issued the circular to the members of the society. (1) He says no authority is needed. (2) He refers to his deep interest in the society. (3) His connection as an honorary member. (4) That the E.C. is powerless to prevent anyone replying to the circular. (5) Because Dr. Langley did wrong. I ask him to read Rule 10, page 8. As to his interest in the society and connection, official or otherwise, read section 9, page 14. (3) and (4) Dr. Langley is not only an honorary member, but a Vice-President of our society, and the E.C. discussed the right of a Vice-President of our society to issue circulars to members. Again, if no authority is necessary, why does the rev. gentleman

hope most sincerely to get the sanction of the E.C.? While the E.C. is discussing these matters it is at a cost of 20s. an hour to the society. This is a matter for serious consideration.

“Yours respectfully,

“A. HOLLAND (E.C. Man).”

Fred Hornsby, of Twickenham, a Trustee of the society, which post he held till he died, August 24th, 1884, also replied, that, as one who had taken a large share in the formation of the society, and still held the office of a Trustee, he was surprised at the reverend gentleman taking the step he did, if, as he said he was, a well-wisher of the society, because in his opinion he could not have done a worse thing if he wished to do harm. Hornsby was in hopes that they had heard the last of Chapman, and he certainly did not expect that a gentleman, who from his profession should be a man of peace, to reopen old sores, and that the members generally were quite capable of judging between Dr. Langley and the Rev. E. Collett. The former was one who had worked hard for us from the first, and the latter could not know much about what he had written.

As a matter of fact, Collett had correspondence with Mr. Hall, of Gloucester, who allowed him to quote from a letter sent to Collett, whom he described, apparently in order to give authority to his statements, as secretary of the Gloucester Branch, which brought the Rev. Collett into conflict with the branch secretary, Hall not being secretary.

Still later this meddlesome individual intervened in matters that affected the internal working of the society, in which the district secretaries and Evans were concerned, and in which Bass concerned himself, and which the E.C. considered, and condemned all parties; that neither Collett nor the General Secretary (Evans) was free from blame. And Collett wrote a letter, which, as it appeared in the “*Gazette*,” was lengthy enough, but the *lacuniaria* suggest that it would have been more lengthy still but for editorial excisions; and yet another was excluded altogether. Personal matters prevailed, and the exhortation to Evans to keep himself free from these intrigues was a needed warning. Vincent, Graham, Cordwell, Phillips, and Evans were all included in it, and the end of it was bad for Vincent, as we shall see later. Phillips was censured by the E.C. for interfering in the internal affairs of the society, and the Rev. E. Collett’s action was also strongly disapproved. Later still Phillips seems to have intervened where he had no business, and the E.C. passed a resolution asking the branches to inform them when it was done. Bass was also written to informing him of Phillips’ conduct.

No sooner was Evans in office than he laid himself out to become acquainted with the needs of the branches, their whims and prejudices even. He was like a surveyor who has to consider all the undulations of lands when surveying for a railway. He went into all with minuteness, and between his taking office and the first E.C. he attended

no less than 25 branches, calling first upon Stratford, which from the society's inception had, with the one exception of its balance sheet, and that being due more to Chapman's incapacity, been the guide of the youthful organisation, and had shown evidence of ability and courage, and intense interest in the society. The circulation of the "Gazette" from the Stratford Branch alone was 400 copies. It had furnished a design for an emblem; it had furnished a witness with excellent evidence before the Royal Commission on Accidents; it denounced the apathy with regard to the Langley loan and subscribed liberally, and wholeheartedly gave adhesion to the "voluntary levy" of 6d., and had in many ways shown resourcefulness and courage, and was the premier branch, till just at that time Battersea Branch displaced it and left it far behind in membership. It was a branch both to learn from and encourage, and he did both. At his last visit to it the present writer was there, and Evans went over the thorny path we had trod. To visit twenty-five branches, and the work he did between his election and the first E.C. meeting, he must have worked like a galley slave. The first business of that E.C. was to go through the minutes of the last meeting, which were largely a record of irrelevancies and spite. The irrelevancies were crossed out. Several said the remarks attributed to the scrutineers' meeting were never uttered—"irrelevant and devoid of truth" was their term.

The remarks of Chapman about Langley, which occupied two pages, had the pen struck through them, Chapman evidently intent upon his own opinions going down the corridor of time as history, and to get a last fling at Langley. Evans' first financial statement showed receipts and expenditure. He had written every branch which had not sent in a balance sheet for 1873, and this date, it must be remembered, was 1875. Nearly every branch said they had sent them, but they had been returned by Chapman. One branch had received £32 in premiums and had spent £31 of it. Swansea and Dudley had refused to pay a levy because the meeting which made it was unconstitutional. Again the E.C. adjourned the payment of Langley's loan, and eventually referred it to the General Meeting. For the first time reports appear showing a bank account with £400 superannuation money. The Birkbeck Bank being the most convenient were the bankers. West Hartlepool, Bishop Auckland, and Westlake had collapsed, and the two former had refused to furnish the effects of their branch, and were ordered to "deliver up all books, papers, documents, securities, moneys, and the property of this society at the Head Office, 25, Finsbury Square, on or before the next E.C. meeting, or proceedings for the recovery of the same would be taken under the Trade Union Act of 1871," which was complied with. Then a long list of branches which had divided the funds. Branches were shown as having more members than they had remitted dues for, Mountain Ash being one, and they had transferred to Aberdare. Toton had expelled a member, when they were reminded that only the E.C. had that power, and they were ordered to restore him. The member admitted using bad language, but had

no intention "to break up the society." There was trouble at Bow and elsewhere. Wimbledon and others were disbanding quickly, others were falling away; chaos, disruption, and confusion was everywhere.

Like a true general Evans surveyed his field, showed the E.C. the blots and blemishes; the difficulties and dangers about them were written with unerring hand. He showed them the goal they should aim at, the discipline they must enforce, the confidence they must win, the loyalty to each other they must have if they were to be an organisation, without which they were a rabble and not a union. The clear brain and strong hand are seen in all these remarks and in his deeds. He showed them also that great boulders lay across the path he had entered upon, and that patience would be needed, and that patience and hard work would win. He had called at the Offices on November 7th, but Chapman was not there. On the 9th Chapman had handed over the keys, seal, and other property, with an inventory. He was pained to say that at the Head Office the affairs were in a most unbusinesslike condition. There was no intelligible system of book-keeping, nor any method of recording the liabilities and assets of the General Fund and other funds. Without taking a summary of each account and invoice it would be impossible to find out the exact condition of each of the accounts of the society. No statement was handed to him of the accounts of the society, or anything that was required to be done, or of any member on the Superannuation Fund to whom he had to remit money. The Auditors, who were authorised to make a special audit previous to his assuming duty, had contented themselves with a summary without any reference to the various accounts to which the different items referred. He was anxious for this to be done, as he could not assume the responsibility for another's work. He did not think he should be called upon to do four months of his predecessor's bad work, and could only report on the term of his office. Meetings must be held to reform.

Finding branches had not paid the levy, he had written them. One hundred and ten branches had sent; ninety-four had not. Cambridge had declined to remit any. He had got the Board of Trade, after some correspondence, to concede the right of representatives being present whenever the interests of truth and justice demanded it. The late General Secretary had written making a claim for £35 6s. balance of salary due at Christmas. He found he had paid himself all the salary due on the day he was leaving, and he finished with the words "There is no cause for despondency," showing at the same time what had to be done to lift themselves from their then condition.

Shrives, who had been appointed Trustee, attended at the E.C. meeting and read the Trustees' report, signed by himself and colleagues, which was the beginning of a quarterly report of the financial affairs, which continues in the same form to this day, save that it was not a Trustees' Report, as then; it is the finding of the whole Finance Committee. Shrives remarked upon the improved



*D. Baxter Langley, L.L.D.
1872-3.*



*Rev. Canon Jenkins, D.D.
1874-6.*



*P. S. MacIver, M.P.
1877-91.*



*Walter Hudson.
1892-8.*



*Geo. Thaxton.
1899-91.*



*W. G. Loraine.
1902-4.*

PRESIDENTS.

state of affairs at the General Office. They had received £710; £253 had been paid away, leaving a balance of £457, belonging chiefly to the Superannuation Fund. They had a difficulty in opening a bank account, as some banks objected on the plea that it might lose them the custom of certain companies and large employers of labour; but they had succeeded in opening an account with the Metropolitan Bank, and a current account with the Birkbeck, and the rule with regard to dealing with moneys forwarded to the G.O. was now carried out in its entirety. They had been prevented from presenting a complete report at an earlier date because they had no money, but a portion of the superannuation money had reached the Treasurer, the late General Secretary being in the habit of cashing P.O. orders and paying money away without it passing through the hands of the Treasurer. All this was now altered. All moneys were handed to the Treasurer and payments made by cheque. They suggested purchasing 3 per cent. Consols, or as a preference railway stock. They could secure the right of sending a representative to the railway shareholders' meeting, and would have an opportunity of stating the grievances of the men at the fountain head.

This idea was first mooted by Langley in 1872. An Investment Fund apart from union premiums was formed, but failed. Later a co-operative scheme was urged by Kentish Town and other branches. As a matter of fact, Trustee Shrides was in error. The Trustee Act forbids such investments—only debenture or other guaranteed stock. In later years, through an error of the railway companies, forms of admission and balance sheets were sent by the London, Chatham, and Dover and the London and South-Western. Pilcher took advantage of it and went to the London, Chatham, and Dover; Alcock to the London and South-Western. Pilcher was howled down, and it was suggested that he be turned out, but Forbes dryly said: "Let him remain, he may learn something." Alcock at the London and South-Western they tried to silence with feet and sticks and cries of "Time," when he told them he appreciated their humour, seeing it was time he was dealing with. The experiment was not a success.

At this E.C. there was trouble about the validity of the election of Evans, and it was carried into the Delegate Meeting. Cordwell and Wyatt wrote of the rejection of certain votes written by the same hand. One resolution sent from branches called upon Evans to resign and Chapman take his place. Wolverhampton declined to acknowledge Evans without a re-scrutiny. Reading and Edge Hill said it was not a truthful report. Reading had issued a circular and was fined and eventually collapsed, so strong was the feeling. Wolverhampton was tersely informed that steps would be taken with them to enforce compliance, they taking the old weapon in use for three years—refusing to pay dues—till they had their way. Pontypool raised the matter at General Meeting. No balance sheet was issued for 1873. The tangle of 1874 made the balance sheet for that year only an estimate.

This is Resolution No. 44, solemnly passed by the E.C. in July, 1874:—

Moved by Manchester, seconded by Leeds, and resolved: "That a sign and password be adopted throughout the whole of this society, the same to be changed quarterly, and adopted and sent forth by the Executive Council to the several district secretaries, and by them to the several branches."

I have also a letter from Langley to John Abbott concerning this matter in which Langley does not favour. It is reminiscent of the time when the men did not know each other, and could not trust one another, and sheds a light upon that particular period. I see no reference anywhere that it went any farther.

Passed at the same meeting this also shows poverty: "That the London districts be called upon to pay the expenses of Mr. Graham so far as postage is concerned."

Chapter IX.

CHAPMAN AND EVANS' FIRST BALANCE SHEET.

THE first balance sheet of the society, which was issued in May, 1873, is the clearest document extant of its affairs, clear in showing how tangled was its finance. It is history woven into figures. All the branches are in alphabetical order, numbering 152, the greater number of which exist to-day. The first thirteen branches with largest numbers are as follow :—

Draymen's Branch, Manchester	1,073
Stratford	400
London Road, Manchester	345
Leeds	334
Salford No. 2	331
Sheffield	315
Battersea	302
Wakefield	293
Kentish Town	271
Paddington	269
West End, London	261
Wolverhampton	260
Worcester	260

There are forty-eight other branches with membership above one hundred. Some of the branches held considerable money. They stand in order as follow :—

	£	s.	d.
Draymen's, Manchester	190	0	0
Wolverhampton No. 1	89	10	7½
Battersea	66	19	3½
Ardwick	65	3	1
Stratford	60	17	9
Salford	44	4	2
London Road, Manchester	44	1	6
Worcester	43	10	11½
Pontypool	42	0	9½
Newcastle	37	10	7
Altrincham	36	5	11
King's Cross	36	1	2

The summarised totals of the Auditors do not in all cases agree with the branch balance sheet. No reports are from Birmingham (Excelsior), Blackburn, Chester, Derby, Edge Hill, Merthyr Tydfil, and Widnes Branches. Bristol had sent one, but it was lost in transit. Salford No. 1 refused to send one up to December 31st, only to November 20th. Newhaven was born and died during the year; that it had but a few members the receipts of £1 4s. 6d. show. The expenditure was "rent, 10s.; summonses, 5s.; secretary's salary, 4s. 7d.; remitted to G.O., 4s. 11d." Barrow-in-Furness expenditure is nil, so is Bishop Auckland, Norwich, Southall, Salford No. 3 and Stockton; but then Stockton received only £1 4s. and had but sixteen members, Longsight running it hard, with 19s. Several branches, which include Brighton with 139 members, Bury seventy, Camberwell, sixty, Bluepits eighty, and others, pay no secretary's salary. Bolton, with 125, only pay 8s.; Barnsley, with 174, £1; which are but samples taken at random. Brighton cannot be called niggardly, because it gives £18 in donations, the G.O. having to be content with £2 13s. 0½d. How closely Mr. Graham, the Organising Secretary, cut down his expenses is seen in charging 1s. for opening a branch, and goes as far as Long Eaton, charging only 6s. 6d. Many of the branch balance sheets reflect their activities, generosity, and even idiosyncrasies. Branches like Wellingboro' and Newcastle show a wealth of detail. The whole balance is alive with facts dramatic as a novel.

This is the General Secretary's preface:—

"GENERAL SECRETARY'S REMARKS.

"GENTLEMEN,—In submitting the Annual Report of the society for 1872, I think some explanation will be expected as to the delay in its issue. Firstly, I would remind you that this being the first year of the society's existence, it could hardly be expected that its affairs would be in that complete state of organisation which we hope to see hereafter. The unavoidable delay in the issue of the rules was also a great drawback. But, perhaps, the greatest difficulty of all was the various times that the branches were holding their quarterly meetings; some determining them by the rules, but the majority by the date on which their branch was opened; and it was an impossibility to prepare a report of the society until a uniform system had been secured throughout.

"Again, the rules as to half-yearly meetings did not meet the requirements of the Trades Union Act, which requires all statements to be made out up to December 31st each year; hence the resolution of the Executive Council that the quarters of all branches should end on the last meeting-night in March, June, September, and December (see my circular of February, 1873) in order to meet the requirements of the Act and to establish a uniform system throughout the society. In this, I am happy to say, the Council has been very successful, only one branch having refused to comply with the resolution.

And, lastly, much delay has been incurred, and an immense amount of labour has been imposed upon the General Office, by the amount of correspondence that has taken place with the various branch secretaries on the subject. However, the difficulties have at last been overcome, and we may reasonably hope they will never occur again.

“ Having succeeded in obtaining reports from all but nine branches, I am enabled to lay before you a tolerably complete report of the society which shows, without including the nine branches which have not sent reports, that there were 17,247 members in the society, and funds in hand to the amount of £2,569. I think, considering the number of men who joined the society, and obtained through its influence that which they sought, and immediately abandoned it, that the above figures are very encouraging; and as regards the funds, I think that to be able to show such a balance, after the heavy expenses which must naturally fall upon a gigantic society at its commencement, and considering the short time that many of the branches had been opened, such an accumulation of funds speaks well for the future.

“ I find on the branch reports many expenses which should not have been incurred and many items which should have been paid out of the Home Management Fund. The reasons why they have been passed are, firstly, because many branches had not yet established a Home Management Fund, owing probably to not being supplied with the rules on opening; and, secondly, because the report could not be delayed any longer. The first year some latitude should if possible be allowed; but in future the rule respecting the establishment of a Home Management Fund must be complied with or the society will not be able to meet its engagements, for, as will be seen, some branches have paid away as much as 50 per cent. of their income for expenses of management, thus leaving only half of their funds available for the real objects of the society. The expense of books will in future only be incurred by new branches. I must here remind branch secretaries that in making out a balance sheet up to a given date they should only include amounts which have been actually received and expended up to that date. In this case I find that many branch secretaries have taken credit for amounts paid away in 1873, which should, therefore, have been shown in their 1873 reports instead of in those for 1872. For instance, the branch reports, as made out, would make it appear that £252 was remitted to the General Office for ‘Dues,’ whereas in that year only £184 was really received at the General Office. Branch secretaries will be pleased to avoid a repetition of this in future, and also to be very careful not to take credit for any amounts in their 1873 reports which have been previously taken credit for in 1872 report, although actually paid in 1873.

“ £726 was subscribed by the branches for the London strike, and as only £372 has been collected, there is a loss to the General Fund of £434, but probably some of this may yet be collected from the members.

“I would take this opportunity of stating that the Council is decidedly opposed to strikes, the Council being of opinion that if railwaymen will only come forward and be firmly united they will gain that to which they are entitled without having recourse to any cessation of work.

“Such an item as £357 for sundries we shall not expect to see again, as such expenses will, for the most part, be paid from the Home Management Fund. (See my previous remarks thereon.)

“Respecting the General Office statements, I think I need say but little, as every detail is clearly shown in respect to every fund and the Auditors have reported fully thereon. It will be observed that no Councilmen’s fees have yet been paid, and when I call attention to the fact that only £184 were received for dues, and no less than £265 were paid away for officers alone the reason will be obvious; and the General Management Fund has only maintained its show of solvency by being augmented from various sources, as shown in the General Office statements.

“The many instances of improvement in the condition of railwaymen which this society has been enabled to effect in this short time are well known to all through the columns of the ‘Railway Service Gazette,’ and speak well for the future power of the society, when its numbers will be increased, its funds augmented, its influences extended, and its organisation completed.

“The figures, both as regards members and funds, would have been much greater had all the men who obtained advanced pay and less hours through the influence of the society continued to subscribe to it in order to show that they were desirous of assisting their less fortunate fellow workers to obtain that which they had gained for themselves. However, if the society only continues to improve as it has done hitherto we may reasonably hope in the report of 1873 to see a vast improvement in every respect.

“The best thanks of all are due to our learned President for his almost superhuman efforts on behalf of this society in the face of such opposition and obstacles as would have driven any man less energetic and devoted to the cause to have abandoned the task in despair. Many thanks are also due to the Vice-Presidents, especially to the Rev. Canon Jenkins for his continued advocacy of the cause on every available occasion. Also to J. Graham, Organising Secretary, for his exertions on behalf of the society.

“In conclusion, I would inform you that our noble patron is as untiring as ever in his efforts, both in and out of Parliament, for the amelioration of the condition of railwaymen; and, not content with starting a paper in their interests and bearing all the expenses, he has, as you are aware, now generously given half the net profits to the society.

“As the ‘Railway Service Gazette’ has always fearlessly and impartially advocated the railwaymen’s cause, ever holding its columns

open for the ventilation of their grievances, the Executive Council considers that it merits the support of every railwayman in the kingdom; and as half the profits go to the society, I trust every member will use his utmost exertion to increase its circulation, for in proportion as its circulation increases so will its influence be extended and the funds of the society augmented. And the only way that railwaymen can show their appreciation of Mr. Bass's efforts is by joining the society which he has founded for their benefit and supporting the paper which he started in their behalf, remembering that he only is worthy of being assisted who tries to help himself.

"I remain, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,

"GEO. CHAPMAN, General Secretary.

"General Office, 25, Finsbury Place, London, E.C., June, 1873."

The branch balance sheets cover varying periods from January to December. The general balance contains no less than ten accounts, in addition to which are schedules embracing the alphabet up to "L," the letter "G" having "a" and "b." The Auditors' report will reveal the confusion of accounts, which remained till Fred Watkin Evans took the reins in November, 1874, when the 1873 balance had not been issued because the 1872 had never been settled, and because of Chapman's inability to deal with finance effectively.

The Auditors said: "In presenting you with the report for the seven months ending December, 1872, we are sorry to be in such a position that deters us from making that report a favourable one. On commencing our labours we found matters in such a disgraceful condition that, instead of dealing with the matter as Auditors, we were compelled to start as accountants, and, to use the expression, 'fish out matters as best as we could.'

"We required certain receipts, for which we wrote the General Secretary on 4th January (he wrote the Committees on 6th January); wrote the President 11th January, repeated on 15th and 18th January; again wrote the General Secretary on 1st February (he wrote the Committees on 3rd February); gave in notice of motion at the E.C. for same on 5th February, which notice was brought on 12th February; stated our difficulty on 24th February; gave in another notice of motion at the E.C. 10th March, which was brought on 17th March; and after this some receipts were handed in, so that we could proceed with our work. We are thus enabled to present it in time to save the penalty of £5 each, not only to ourselves, but the other officers of the society, as per the 'Trade Union Act, 1871.'

"DELEGATE.—We had three balance sheets for this fund; two made out by different Committees, and one by the General Office. The latter was not completed, and one of the former, made out at the Delegate Meeting, only went up to a certain date, and so included only about two-thirds of the particulars. The other we have worked

on, together with the receipts and what information could be gleaned from the others. It was made out by Messrs. Shrides, Evans, and Sainsbury. Although it contains particulars to a further date, we are sorry to find it also contains serious errors. There are two errors in the casting—one £7 and the other £1. We also find £18 11s. 6d. taken credit for in error, as having been paid to delegates, so that the balance of that fund, instead of being, as stated by them, £15 2s. 11½d., should have been £40 14s. 5½d.

“STRIKE.—We are sorry to be compelled to give such a bad account of this fund and the manner in which the same has been dealt with. £711 has been taken credit for as paid out to men on strike, but as to this being correct, it is quite impossible to say, as no receipts whatever have been taken for the money paid away. It is true a book has been handed in to us as a record of the same, but no mention is made of any money in it, and being in such a disgraceful state with ticks, smudges, rubbings, and scratchings-out that we are unable to even rely on it as showing how many men had been paid. So that the only remark we have to make is that £711 18s. 4d. is taken credit for as having been paid away, for which no receipt can be produced. Then an E.C. minute of September 2nd, in which Messrs. King, Bull, and Boon received £3 each, and the two latter would have to refund £2 each.”

An account against Bull is carried down to the balance sheet of 1878, when F. Evans suggested it should no longer disfigure the balance sheet. The Evans in the trio above is T. Evans, Bow. The Auditors go on in their grim work, which is amusing to us half-a-century after.

“The amount taken credit for as expenses is £10 8s. 5½d.; the receipts show £10 3s. 11½d. only. But neither of these is correct, as we find 10s., August 23rd, expenses received by Mr. King, whereas the £3 allowed him as per above resolution included that date, so the 10s. will have to be refunded by him.”

In the “Emigration” account the Auditors point out the postage cost is one-sixth of the income. Here is another, which I quote in full, as it sparkles with humour:—

“INVESTMENT.—As regards the following item: Expenses, 6s., no receipt has been handed to us.

“KIRTLEBRIDGE DEFENCE FUND.—We notice the following amount: Mr. Vincent’s salary and expenses, £7 6s. 1d., of which receipt showing £2 6s. only is to hand. It is true there is a statement for £5 4s., which shows received £5, but this is not signed.” Other severe strictures follow. Two pages explanatory are given by Shrides and Chapman, and are in numbered paragraphs up to five, the other part being under the head of “Strike,” but in my copy, which is evidently the original one the Auditors had, there is between the two leaves the following written and pasted in: “Delegate Meeting and Strike Fund,

paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.—As this has reference to some remarks made by the Committees, it cannot in the slightest degree refer to us.—(Signed) W. HOWE and E. PACKER, Auditors, June 12th, 1873.”

Then this, which deals with the head of “Strike” in the explanatory pages: “Strike.—As desired we have looked into these matters and regret to say that consistently with our duties as Auditors we find ourselves unable to accept the explanations given with the view, if approved by us, of their being added to our report—in fact, they form no part thereof and appear rather premature, inasmuch as they anticipate a call that has not yet arisen, whilst, on the other hand, the Council has adopted the explanations as far as they go. The accuracy of our report being undisturbed and in no wise questioned, we must respectfully decline interfering in matters not within our province.—(Signed) E. PACKER and W. HOWE, Auditors, June 12th, 1873.”

It is evident that J. Pilcher, though taking part in this and a prior society, had not come to the birth as a financial critic, as he did in the after years with such telling effect. It is headed—

“EXPLANATIONS RESPECTING THE AUDITORS’ REPORT.

“1. DELEGATE MEETING.—Referring to the remarks respecting the amount paid for which no authority could be found—the authority was given at the Council meeting held on July 23rd, when the Finance Committee gave their report. That report, dealing with all the items we have alluded to, respecting no authority. (See ‘Railway Service Gazette,’ No. 26.)

“2. The £2 19s. 6d. paid (to Mr. Shrives) was for railway fare from Poplar to Chester and back, loss of time, and expenses on the journey only. He being sent by the Council. (See ‘R.S.G.,’ N. 20.)

“3. The receipt for 12½ per cent. voted by the Council was signed by the three representatives named, on behalf of the Finance and Rules Committee, they having paid out of that amount upwards of £11 for materials, postage, rail and ’bus fares, in connection with those duties. (See the General Secretary’s remarks at the E.C. on September 16th, also the report of the E.C. on September 30th, October 14th, 21st, and 30th, and November 11th. Also Mr. Graham’s remarks at the E.C. on November 4th.)

“4. STRIKE FUND.—The £2 2s. 2d. paid (to Mr. Shrives) was for printing circulars and bills, and postage of the same, as per resolution of the E.C. on August 20th. (See General Secretary’s remarks at the E.C. on August 27th.)

“5. The 16s. paid (to Mr. Shrives) for Labour Union Conference was the fourth part of the expenses for rent of room, printing, reporter, and postage only, as per resolution of the E.C., December 16th. (See ‘R.S.G.,’ No. 47.)

Delegate meeting and Strike Fund

^{1. 2. 3. 4. 5} paragraphs
As this has reference to some remarks
made by the Committees, it cannot in
the slightest degree refer to us -

Signed H. Howe, E. Parker, Auditors

June 12th 1873.

Strike

As desired we have looked into these
matters and regret to say that consistently
with our duty as auditors we find
ourselves unable to accept the
explanations given with the view
if approved of by us, of their being
added to our report. In fact they
form a part thereof and appear
rather premature inasmuch as
they anticipate a call that has not
yet arisen, whilst on the other hand
the Council has adopted the explanations
as far as they go. The accuracy of
our report being undisturbed and no
wise questioned we must respectfully

" STRIKE.—With reference to the Auditors' remarks, the Committee desire to state that the men, the first week, were paid by the General Secretary, the name of each man being entered in a book for that purpose, and each name was checked off as paid. This the Committee acted upon as a precedent throughout. Moreover, verbal reports were made to the E.C. every week of the number of men relieved, which reports were adopted, also a statement was published every week in the 'Gazette' giving the number of men relieved.

" The £3 alluded to was voted by the Council for services rendered in obtaining and furnishing the new offices and other important duties discharged by the Committee, and was quite independent of the Strike Fund.

" Receipts were handed in to the General Office for Mr. Hardcastle's grants, which amounts were duly authorised by the E.C.

" The 20s. paid Linton was by order of the E.C. as a grant to enable him to remove his furniture, etc., from London to Bedford.

" The amounts—15s. and 16s. 9d.—for Farrell and Sturgeon were paid to them to enable them to go to Manchester to employment. These men being on the Strike Fund, the Committee considered it a wise policy to assist them into the country, thus taking them off the strike list. This policy was fully endorsed by the E.C., to whom it was reported.

" The grant of £2 to Colley was by order of the E.C. to assist him in starting a small business and thus removing his name from off the Strike Fund, and for which a receipt was handed in to the General Office.

" The sum of 12s. 6d. paid by Cambridge for rules is accounted for in the first half-year of 1873.

" The Emigration Committee beg to state that the inquiries from various members were very numerous respecting emigration, thus accounting for the apparent heavy postage.

" In conclusion, the E.C. beg to state that all payments made by the Committees were sanctioned by them, although they regret that there are no records on the minutes of the same.

" The above explanations were unanimously adopted at the meeting of the Executive Council held on Thursday, June 5th, 1873.

" C. SHRIVES, Chairman.

GEO. CHAPMAN, General Secretary."

There was no balance sheet for 1873, because no satisfactory one had been produced for 1872. Indeed, in the national archives the balance sheet for 1873 is in two statements, and both have balances different from our published figures, as they do from each other. Evans prepared the balance sheet for 1874, but such was the confusion

still existing that it was more of an estimate than a balance sheet. Its Auditors are E. Packer and John Taylor, the latter being well known to the present writer. He was a member of the Brick Lane Branch, and remained with it till the membership was reduced to seven, when those seven were transferred to other branches. The 1874 balance sheet is, like its successor, a record of the doings of the year, the strength of the union, its finances, special events of the year, and on its flyleaf, in large type, widely spaced, is—

“QUESTIONS FOR 1875.

“How best to augment the Superannuation Fund and extend its usefulness?

“What means can be adopted to secure payment for Sunday duty for all classes of railway servants?

“Is it not desirable to public safety that the Government should prohibit excessive hours of duty being performed by railway servants holding positions responsible for the safety of life and limb?

“Is it desirable that power should be given by the Government to the Board of Trade to compel railway companies to adopt known improvements conducive to safety?

“Would the transfer of railways to the State beneficially or injuriously affect the position of railway servants?

“Should not managers and directors be made *criminally* responsible for wilful neglect of public safety in the same manner as servants now are?”

The balance sheet for 1875 is his, covering a complete year of his work.

No wonder that both the E.C. and Auditors were enthusiastic about the changed conditions of affairs after 1874. The 1875 balance sheet is foolscap size, is of sixteen pages, and has a large sheet 2ft. 6in. by 1ft. 10in. inside showing the branches in detail, and was issued by June, 1876. It is the most comprehensive balance sheet ever issued by the society. (See Appendix C.) There are no less than five pages of information about general matters, which is a history of the society's doings during the year. Of the branch affairs in the General Office accounts, apart from the large sheet, there are twelve columns. During 1875 Stratford handed over its premiership to Battersea No. 1. There were only seven branches with over 200 members. They are:—

Battersea No. 1	357
Stratford	279
Cardiff	270
Nine Elms No. 1	237
Miles Platting	212
Bristol	207
Preston	204

The branches highest financially are: Battersea No. 1, Wolverhampton No. 1, Nine Elms, Stratford, Paddington, Cardiff. Among the defaulting branches Birmingham figures both for the Excelsior Branch and the District. The margin of the large sheet referred to shows in the space of a newspaper column all those branches which had defective balance sheets and what the defects were. The membership at the end of 1875 was 13,018, a decrease of 1,236 members, which cannot be so gauged because it was not known what the membership was in 1874. The balance of income over expenditure was £2,955 11s. 7½d. In the balance sheet for 1875 are 29 branches under the head of "Black List" that have failed to send in returns for 1874, though repeatedly applied to. Sheffield is the worst, because three out of its four branches have so failed.

Chapter X.

MR. EVANS AND THE NEW EXECUTIVE—THE MANCHESTER DISTRICT DELEGATE MEET- ING, 1877—THE ORPHANAGE.

THE activities of the society during 1875-6 were marked, and an extraordinary number of circulars was issued during these two years. Though many calls were made upon the branches they took them in good part, seeing that openness and efficiency now marked the society's proceedings. Lengthy as they are, I here put in the whole of the minutes of one Executive meeting as showing how history was being made.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN, WILSON STREET, LONDON, E.C., ON JULY 21ST, 22ND, 23RD, AND 24TH, 1875.

The following representatives were present :—

John Graham and George Boon, No. 1 (London) District.

S. Wyatt and Edward Harford, No. 2 (Bristol and South Wales) District.

John Hague, No. 3 (Nottingham) District.

Charles B. Vincent and German Waine, No. 4 (Central and Welsh) District.

J. M. Rowlands and James Cordwell, No. 5 (Manchester) District.

T. P. Malcolm and Thomas Holmes, No. 6 (North-East) District, and The General Secretary.

Mr. Vincent was voted to the chair.

It was resolved to sit from 9-30 a.m. to 6 p.m., with an interval of one hour for dinner.

The General Secretary read the minutes of the last meeting.

Resolved: "That the minutes of the previous meeting be accepted as correct."

On the discussion of the minutes, the General Secretary stated that owing to sixty branches having failed to send balance sheets for 1874, the annual balance sheet could not be issued.

Resolved: "That the balance sheet for 1874 in its imperfect state be placed in the printer's hands within the next month; and that those branches that have failed to send the returns be noted as defaulters."

The detailed account of Dr. Langley's expenses was produced.

Resolved: "That Dr. Langley's expenses in his visits to the North in 1872 and 1873 be paid."

Resolved: "That the minutes of the last meeting be confirmed."

The General Secretary read his report, and the following resolutions were passed in reference to the subjects referred to in it:—

Resolved: "That the General Secretary, in conjunction with the Bristol district secretary, take the necessary steps to open a branch of this society in Reading at an early date."

Resolved: "That each district forward to the General Office a half-yearly report, stating the business done in the district, and reporting on the state of the branches; such reports to be forwarded in time for consideration at the ensuing meeting of the Executive Council."

Resolved: "That a grant of £30 be made from the Central Fund to assist the North-East district"; and further

Resolved: "That in the foregoing resolution the grant is made on the conditions that a permanent secretary is employed; and the General Secretary is specially instructed to superintend the work of the district committee with a view of co-operating with them."

Resolved: "That although the Macclesfield Branch is, as stated, nearly seventy miles from Birmingham, it is not that distance from Crewe or Stoke, and the expenses no greater than if the branch was in the Manchester district, and the Council cannot therefore on that ground grant the request of the Macclesfield members to be transferred."

An amendment was moved: "That, having heard the appeal of the Macclesfield Branch, the Council grant the same."

For the resolution, six; for the amendment, four. The resolution was carried.

Resolved: "That the Oxford Branch be requested to pay the legal expenses in connection with the inquest on Guard Penn at Worcester; and the London district pay the other expenses; and the General Secretary be hereby instructed to write the Oxford Branch explaining the necessity there was for prompt action in the matter, but regrets the branch had not been earlier informed of the same."

Resolved: "That the General Secretary be empowered on behalf of the Executive Council to approve of district and branch by-laws in the intervals of the Council meetings."

Resolved: "That Casling and the other two members of the Clapham Branch, who have been convicted of conspiracy to defraud the L. & N. W. Railway Company, be expelled the society."

Resolved: "That there be a Central Committee formed in London to carry out the movement for Sunday payment, and any reasonable expense incurred shall be paid from the General Fund. The Committee will have power to form and act in concert with other committees."

Resolved: "The General Secretary to be the Secretary of the Committee, and, further, that Messrs. Shrives, Boon, Graham, Sampson,

King, Carter, Phipps, Gibson, Nash, Compton, Reynolds, Bowles, and Pilcher be the Committee, with power to add to their number. Five to form a quorum. Each Committeeman to receive 1s. for each attendance and third-class railway fare."

Resolved: "That the form of memorial for presentation to the directors prepared by the General Secretary be adopted."

Resolved: "That the time of printing and date of presentation of the memorials be left to the Central Committee, and that 500 be at once ordered by the General Secretary for the information of the members."

Resolved: "That the action of the General Secretary in authorising the South-Eastern Branch to pay an additional sum to Mr. Jones be approved of in accordance with Rule 12, clause 1, and at the same time enters its protest against the unfair manner in which he has been treated by the L. B. & S. C. Railway Company."

Resolved: "That as the Edge Hill Branch acted from want of information in paying superannuation to the relatives of William Gould, deceased, its action be approved and the money repaid to the branch from the Superannuation Fund."

Resolved: "That unless an injured member makes a claim for Superannuation Benefit within twenty-eight days after it is known that he is permanently disabled, he shall forfeit his claim for the time thus omitted, *i.e.*, if it is five weeks after his permanent disablement is known he shall forfeit one week's benefit, and so on."

Resolved: "That those branches in the Manchester district (and all other branches) which have not paid the entire entrance fee of 2s. per member be requested to comply with the rules and forward all entrance fees received since October 1st, 1873."

Resolved: "That the legal expenses incurred in the defence of the three Clapham Junction members over and above the amount paid by the branch be borne by the Central Legal and Reserve Fund."

Resolved: "That in future any legal case involving the expenditure of more than £5 be considered of much importance, and the sanction of the Executive Council given before the defence is undertaken. That the General Secretary, on receiving particulars of such case, submit the same to the society's solicitor, and on behalf of the Executive Council act in accordance with his opinion."

Resolved: "That the claim of Mr. Dubois, the accountant, be disputed."

Resolved: "That as Ockwell (who claimed payment for expenses incurred in defending himself from the charge of felony) by his own free act brought on himself his misfortune, the decision of the Gloucester Branch (in withholding legal assistance) is upheld by this Council."

Resolved: "That as opinion of counsel in Forster's claim for damages for false imprisonment is by no means certain of resulting in success, and as the expenses of the action would be so heavy in

the event of defeat, both for Forster and the society, and having regard to the long period (two years) that has elapsed since his imprisonment, the case be not taken up by the society."

An amendment was moved: "That the case be taken up and a claim be made for the wages due to Forster for the time he was suspended."

The resolution was carried by six to four.

Resolved: "That the foregoing resolution apply only to the claims for false imprisonment, and that an action be entered against the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Company for wages due to Forster during the time he was suspended."

Resolved: "That the remainder of money owing to the society by Mr. J. H. Bull be paid in instalments of 10s. per month, and in the event of two months' payment being in arrear immediate proceedings be taken to recover the whole sum."

Resolved: "That this Council protest against the abrupt manner in which the Royal Commission desire to close the 'Inquiry into the Cause of Accidents on the Various Railways,' and consider it advisable that they should reconsider their decision not to visit South Wales, the west of England, and Birmingham districts, places as fruitful with accidents to railway servants as any in the whole country. In the event of the inquiry being aborted in the manner proposed, this society resolves not to participate further in the proceedings of the Commission by procuring or producing evidence."

Resolved: "That this Council regret that Sir E. W. Watkin should have introduced a 'Compensation to Workpeople Bill' which limits the amount of compensation to be given in the event of injury or death, but in the event of any future measure of his omitting such limitations and substituting a clause giving power to the judge and two chosen assessors to fix the amount the same shall receive the best support of this Council and society."

Resolved: "That the Council desires to express its entire satisfaction with the way Mr. Elgood has conducted legal cases for the society, and thanks him for the special interest he has taken in the work of the society in addition to that dealt with by him in his capacity of legal adviser."

Resolved: "That two members attend to represent the society at the Trades Union Congress to be held at Glasgow in October next."

The General Secretary and Mr. C. B. Vincent were chosen as the two representatives.

Resolved: "That the part of the General Secretary's report setting forward the relations of the society to the Railway Servants' Orphanage be printed, and that this Council, believing that the Orphanage is thoroughly deserving of support, recommends each member not only to pay his subscriptions, but to do his utmost to obtain subscribers to the fund."

Resolved: "That the General Secretary is hereby instructed to oppose the present system of voting orphans into the Orphanage, and is authorised to advocate a fairer method by moving that only the orphans of subscribers become candidates."

Resolved: "That the General Secretary's resignation on the Orphanage Executive Committee be not accepted by this Council."

Resolved: "That there be a Central Committee in London, in connection with the Orphanage movement, and that the London District Committee compose the same, with power to add to their number."

Resolved: "That the General Secretary be secretary of the Central Orphanage Committee."

A letter was read from the General Secretary asking for a fortnight's holiday, and for assistance during his absence.

The Council acceded to his request and granted the same.

Resolved: "That the Council cannot recommend the expenditure of the society's funds for the purpose of advertising in the 'Railway Service Gazette,' but will use its influence to extend its circulation, and will appeal to the members to do so, to prevent a loss to its proprietor thereby."

An amendment was moved: "That in the absence of any financial statement of the management of the 'Gazette,' this Council is unable to suggest any way to assist it out of its difficulties."

Four voted for the amendment; five against.

Six voted for the proposition; three against. The proposition was therefore carried.

Resolved: "That the Editor of the 'Gazette' be requested to print gratuitously a sufficient number of copies of the appeal drawn up by the General Secretary, who will afterwards forward them to branches of the society."

Resolved: "That the General Secretary's report be adopted."

Resolved: "That in order to place the General and Central Funds in a thoroughly solvent condition, this Council authorises a levy of 1s. per member (in accordance with rule) on all members good on the books on July 1st, 1875. The same to be sent to the General Office with the September quarter's dues."

Branches are reminded that their funds are only responsible for donative allowance, and if at any time unable to do this they will be assisted from the Central Fund. The General Secretary to state in his circular calling the levy a statement of the liabilities referred to, and to add any explanation he may consider necessary.

Resolved: "That Mr. Bowles be the Auditor for the society in place of Mr. Packer."

Resolved: "That the General Secretary's financial report be accepted."

Resolved: "That in all future elections Rule 2, clause 2, shall mean that all candidates for Executive Councilmen shall be members of some branch in the district they are nominated to represent."

Resolved: "That a member be considered good on the books until he is more than thirteen weeks in arrears."

An amendment substituting "sixteen weeks" for "thirteen weeks" was lost."

Resolved: "That the General Secretary write the defaulting secretaries reported to this Council, viz., Llanelly and Sowerby Bridge, and threaten them with legal proceedings."

The General Secretary was authorised to have printed the names and addresses of branch secretaries, and the meeting-houses and lodge nights, if possible, and supply the same to districts and branches.

The following resolutions in reference to the withdrawal of the Merchant Shipping Amendment Act were passed:—

Resolved: "That this Council most deeply regret that the Government should have decided to withdraw the most valuable and important Bill before the House—'The Merchant Shipping Bill'—and hereby protests against the indifference shown to a class who need so much the assistance of the legislature as the merchant seamen."

Resolved: "That the General Secretary obtain a suitable frame in which the testimonial to M. T. Bass, Esq., be placed, and a suitable opportunity be taken for the General Secretary and some of the London Committee to present the same to that gentleman."

Resolved: "That the next Council meeting be held on the fourth Tuesday in January, 1876." FRED W. EVANS, *General Secretary*.

August 6th, 1875.

The following are the totals of the receipts and expenditure for half-year ending June 30th, 1875:—

GENERAL MANAGEMENT FUND.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To Balance brought forward	42	15	9	By Expenditure	344	18	11
„ Amounts received	371	5	2	„ Balances:—			
				Due from Delegate Expense			
				Fund	£26	8	2½
				In hand	42	13	9½
						69	2 0
	£414	0	11		£414	0	11

SUPERANNUATION FUND.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To Balance brought forward	461	7	11	By Expenditure on Claims	40	10	0
„ Entrance Fees	197	18	0	„ Balances:—			
„ Dues	16	6	1	Due from Central and Legal			
				Defence Fund	£96	13	4
				In hand.....	538	8	8
						635	2 0
	£675	12	0		£675	12	0

CENTRAL AND LEGAL DEFENCE FUND.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To Amounts received	14	5	7	By Expenditure	141	13	4
„ Balance:—				„ Balance	9	5	7
Loan from Superannuation							
Fund	£96	13	4				
Loan from Bat-							
tersea Branch. 40	0	0					
	136	13	4				
	£150	18	11		£150	18	11

ORPHANAGE ACCOUNT.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To Income	6	19	3	By Balance	6	19	3

DELEGATE EXPENSE FUND.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To Balance brought forward	100	11	6	By Expenditure	180	11	10½
„ Amounts received	53	12	2				
„ Loan from General Manage-							
ment Fund.....	26	8	2½				
	£180	11	10½		£180	11	10½

DR. LANGLEY'S LOAN.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To Balance brought forward	8	14	0	By Balance	13	17	6
„ Subscriptions	5	3	6				
	£13	17	6		£13	17	6

GOODS AND RULES ACCOUNT.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To Amounts received	41	9	2½	By Balance	41	9	2½

GROSS STATEMENT OF ALL ACCOUNTS.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To all Balances brought forward...	613	18	7	By Total Expenditure of all Funds	708	3	6½
„ all Receipts	746	18	11½	„ Balances carried forward.....	652	14	0
	£1360	17	6½		£1360	17	6½

NOTE.—These accounts only refer to moneys dealt with by the General Office, and have no reference to the sums of money in the Branches, which probably in the aggregate amount to £10,000.

FRED W. EVANS, *General Secretary.*

August 6th, 1875.

In order to assist the General Management Fund, owing to the heavy cost of the legal defence to the three members of the Clapham Junction Branch, Battersea lent the General Office £40. It is to be regretted that the three members' cases were so bad that they had to be expelled.

The following circular, issued as the result of one of these resolutions, shows how we stood financially :—

Circular 13.

AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF RAILWAY SERVANTS.

Head Office : 25, Finsbury Place, London, E.C.

A CALL OR LEVY ON THE BRANCH FUNDS OF ONE SHILLING PER MEMBER.

To the Officers and Members of theBranch.

GENTLEMEN,

The Executive Council at its last meeting passed the following resolution :—

“ That in order to place the General Management Fund and the Central and Legal Defence Fund in a thoroughly solvent condition, this Council (in accordance with rule) authorises a call of 1s. per member from the branch funds on all members good on the books on July 1st, 1875. The same to be forwarded to the General Office with the September quarter's dues.”

I am desired by the Council to remind branches that under the present rules their funds are only responsible to members for donative allowance.

Legal assistance, the assistance of weak branches, and superannuation claims are met from the General Office.

Each good member subscribes 13s. annually: Of this amount 4s. 4d. is devoted to management purposes, leaving 8s. 8d. to provide all benefits; 1s. is sent to the General Office for the Superannuation Fund, and 1s. for the Central and Legal Defence Fund. Thus, out of 8s. 8d. subscribed by each member for all monetary benefits, only 2s. is devoted to superannuation, legal defence, and assistance of weak branches, whilst 6s. 8d. is retained by the branches, which are responsible for donative allowance alone; the amount levied is, therefore, a reasonable one.

In order to place members in a position to judge of the necessity for the call or levy, a statement of the liabilities of the two funds is appended, together with the amount of money in hand to meet them on June 30th.

I. GENERAL MANAGEMENT FUND.

The whole of the liabilities of this fund are given, but the amounts incurred during the half-year will be met by the current income. It

is the old debts which encumber this fund, some of which were contracted as far back as 1872-3. They have been handed down to me as bad legacies, and are hindrances to the society's progress, besides being a reproach to a powerful association. To maintain credit and prevent unpleasant proceedings (which are threatened in some cases) it is necessary that the old outstandings should be cleared up.

The Liabilities of the Fund are as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
(1) Dr. Baxter Langley's Loan, incurred in 1872, during London and North-Western strike...	200	0	0
(2) Do. Expenses in 1872-3	26	6	0
(3) Mr. Evans, of Bow, for Preston's case (1873)	2	2	0
(4) Mr. S. Wyatt's Loan, balance unpaid of the £150 borrowed	112	10	0
Ditto ditto Interest due.....	2	0	0
(5) Balance of Accountant's Charge for Investigation of 1872 accounts	65	0	0
Cost of Writ issued by him for recovery of above	3	3	0

The following are current liabilities:—

Mr. Crookes, for printing new rules	*47	5	0
Messrs. Beveridge and Co., quarterly printing, etc., account	*24	8	0
Proprietor of "Railway Service Gazette" for June quarter advertisement	*4	17	6
†Executive Councilmen's Fees, etc., estimated at.....	*45	0	0
Total Liabilities of the G.M. Fund	£532	11	6

To meet which there was in hand, June 30th:—

	£	s.	d.
Subscription to pay Dr. Baxter Langley's Loan	13	17	6
Balance in hand of General Management and Rules account ...	84	3	0
There is also owing to this Fund—			
From the Districts	14	0	0
From Mr. J. H. Bull	5	13	6

Total Assets	£117	14	0
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Leaving a Deficit of £414 17s. 6d.

* The amounts marked thus * could be paid from the current Receipts, as they are current Expenditure.

† This is a new charge on the G.M. Fund.

Apart from the **Old Debts**, the General Management Fund is in a **solvent state**. In addition to the ordinary expenditure it has, during the half-year, paid back £37 10s. of Mr. Wyatt's Loan, and borne £26 8s. 2½d. deficit of the Delegate Expense Fund.

II. CENTRAL AND LEGAL DEFENCE FUND.

In addition to the deficit already alluded to, there are heavy liabilities incurred on account of this fund. It has been called on to pay for a heavy legal assistance, and support a large number of members on donation for a lengthened period (owing to the lock-out in South Wales); and that before one penny had been paid into the fund by the branches. Its liabilities were incurred previous to the existence of an actual fund. To meet the pressing emergencies referred to money was borrowed by the Council from the Superannuation Fund and the Battersea Branch, and credit obtained from our solicitor, and it is, in part, to pay these moneys that the 1s. call or levy is now made.

The Liabilities are as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
(1) Loan from Battersea Branch for Legal Assistance to members of the Clapham Junction Branch.....	40	0	0
Due to Mr. Thomas, solicitor, for same	34	19	2
(2) Estimated cost of defence of Bro. Perkins at Bedford Assizes.....	50	0	0
(3) Due to Mr. Elgood, solicitor, for various legal cases	33	19	0
(4) Due to Superannuation Fund for money borrowed therefrom to pay Donative Allowance to South Wales members	96	13	4
(5) Grant made by Council to assist North-East District to reorganise its strength...	30	0	0
	<u>£285</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>6</u>

To meet which there was in hand:—

	£	s.	d.
Amounts received up to June 30th on account of this Fund..	14	5	7

Leaving a Deficit of £271 5s. 11d.

The whole of the above has been incurred in strict accordance with rule, and all the items are (with the exception of the last) benefits to members. The charges for legal assistance on this Fund will always be heavy and uncertain in amount.

It will thus be seen that the

Total Liabilities are:—	£	s.	d.
General Management Fund	532	11	6
Central and Legal Defence Fund	285	11	6
Total Liabilities	£818	3	0

The amounts in hand or

owing are:—	£	s.	d.
General Management Fund	117	14	0
Central and Legal Defence Fund	14	5	7
Total Assets	£131	19	7

Gross Deficit, £686 3s. 5d.

There has been since the 30th of June sufficient money received to reduce this deficit by £150, but there have also been fresh liabilities incurred, and to be solvent a fund should have money in hand before it spends it.

I trust the foregoing explanation will be satisfactory to every member, and that the necessity for the levy will be justly attributed to the old debts of the society, and the legal claims of members to its funds.

I have only to add that the levy is for all good members on the books on July 1st last, and that it is to be sent to the General Office with the other dues for September quarter, or before.

I am, gentlemen,

Yours faithfully and fraternally,

FRED W. EVANS, *General Secretary.*

August 6th, 1875.

Please read this at two branch meetings.

The liabilities side is exaggerated for effect. The Langley loan, as before stated, was paid, and this E.C. had decided upon the £26 6s. as due to him. The account of Dubois also was settled for £55, and as he had agreed to pay legal expenses the £3 3s. for writ ought not to have been in, but it is all exaggerated to bring in the 1s. levy more easily.

Langley received the consent of the E.C. to issue the following circular. The flyleaf of my copy has this address on it: W. White, 13, Waterloo Street, Willmott Street, Bethnal Green. Among the historic relics I have is the voting paper of this same individual in the voting of the district E.C. for London, of which the first candidate was A. Casling, who with two others were expelled. He voted for Casling, but not for E. Cramp, the second one.

**"TO THE MEMBERS OF THE AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF
RAILWAY SERVANTS.**

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,

"On the 5th of January, 1874, I felt it my duty to address you upon the condition of the society at that time, and to explain my reasons for resigning the very honourable position of your President, which I had occupied since the foundation of the society, in the establishment of which I took an active part. I am not now intending to retrace in detail the various allegations and arguments contained in that document, but will merely summarise them:—

"1. That the old Executive had had unexampled difficulties to contend against in laying the foundations of a new society, and that it deserved the confidence of the members.

"2. That one of the chief of those difficulties was the insubordination and incompetency of the (then) General Secretary, who could not perform the duties himself nor assist the committees who were appointed to do them.

"3. That proper accounts had never been kept by him, and that the financial position of the society could not be accurately ascertained.

"4. That the attack upon ex-railwaymen, members of the Council, was undeserved and impolitic.

"5. That my own honour was being in danger of being compromised by the General Secretary, inasmuch as proper minutes were not kept, and my instructions and those of the Executive Council were openly repudiated or resolutely disobeyed.

"6. That no man of honour could retain the position of President when the General Secretary thus defied him and the Council, and that under such circumstances I felt it due to you and my own self-respect to resign the responsibilities of the Presidential chair, if the (then) General Secretary were re-elected.

"7. That as the Manchester Delegate Meeting re-elected the General Secretary, I could not with honour, or with usefulness, continue my official connection with the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, although my earnest wishes for its prosperity continued unaltered.

"I VENTURE TO THINK THAT NO MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY WILL SAY THAT THESE ALLEGATIONS WERE 'UNTRUE,' OR THAT MY CIRCULAR WAS 'UNCALLED FOR.'

"At the Executive Council Meeting held on the 14th July, 1874, the following resolution having been moved by South Wales, and seconded by Manchester, was passed, and was immediately communicated to me by Mr. Chapman :—

" 'That this Council having considered the circular issued by Dr. J. Baxter Langley, expresses its opinion that such circular was entirely uncalled for; *the charges contained therein having been proved to the satisfaction of this Council as unfounded*, we call upon the said Dr. J. B. Langley to resign his position as an honorary member of this society.' "

"As the allegations in my circular were in most cases supported by reports in the 'Railway Service Gazette,' or by the minutes of the Council, or by facts notorious to all, and as they had never been shown to be untrue, I was quite sure that time would prove that this resolution was a mere outburst of party spirit, instigated by the General Secretary and carried by his friends, as partisans. TIME HAS PROVED THAT TO BE THE CASE.

"Immediately upon the resolution being made public, I had letters from railwaymen in all parts of the country begging me to take no notice of this insult, and I waited, *feeling sure that the justice of my cause would ultimately prevail*.

"At the meeting of the Executive, October 7th, 1874, it was resolved :—

" 'That the resolution calling on Dr. Langley to resign his position as an honorary member of this society be rescinded,' and 'That the General Secretary (Mr. Chapman) forward to Dr. Langley this resolution rescinding the resolution passed at the last Executive Council.'

"True to his real antecedents, the General Secretary refused to forward this resolution, and never did so, thus defying the authority of the Council *as he had so often done before*.

"At this meeting (see 'Railway Service Gazette,' October 23rd, 1874) the Manchester representative who moved the original resolution calling upon me to resign, admitted that he did so upon *a mere hearsay report*, which had not the least foundation, and with reference to which *he never asked for information*, though the original letters and copies of my replies were preserved in my office, and were shown to all who asked for them. The South Wales representative, who seconded the original motion, opposed it being rescinded upon the ground that I was not willing to admit that my statements were erroneous, and to declare that after all 'everything was all right.'

"I MAINTAIN THAT MOST OF THE ALLEGATIONS IN MY CIRCULAR HAVE BEEN PROVED TO BE CORRECT, AND THAT NONE OF THEM HAVE BEEN PROVED TO BE WRONG. And I cannot even now admit that everything was 'all right.'

"So much for the period during which the late General Secretary held office. The report of the Scrutineers made to the Executive Council

on the 7th October, 1874, showed that the members of the society were gradually emerging from the mists in which they had been shrouded; Mr. Chapman was displaced—6,016 *members of the society having voted against his continuance in office*, whilst only 2,016 voted in his favour. Mr. Fred W. Evans, of Bristol, was at the head of the poll, and has since been installed in office. I did not know Mr. Evans, and my impressions were not favourable; but since he has been in office, he has shown himself so energetic, so honest and open in his policy, and so above all intrigue, that I am bound to congratulate the society upon his appointment, and to ask from all the members their cordial and active support for the present General Secretary. 'The report and financial statements' issued from the General Office a few weeks ago are a credit to any society, and the 'report' of the General Secretary which prefaces it, with the 'Questions for 1875,' show a knowledge and grasp of the subject, which assures me that you have 'the right man in the right place.'

"You have now before you in that document *for the first time*, a complete statement of the strength of the society, its resources, and a balance sheet of its funds. It was the appearance of that report, etc., which chiefly suggested this letter, because the strength (and weakness) of the society is therein disclosed *for the first time*. The society has 14,254 members, and a balance of £9,393 5s. in hand, being equal to 13s. 2d. per member. This is good so far, but looking at the total number of railway servants throughout the country it is not nearly as good as it might be, because there is no class of men with such facilities for combination as the employés on railways. The causes for distrust have now been removed; Mr. Evans, the nominee of the provincial men, has been heartily received by the London members; the city and the country *are no longer misrepresented to each other*. There is now no reason why the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants should not become the largest, the most powerful, and the best managed institution in the kingdom. I was present at its birth; I did my best to nurse it in its early years, and I am too happy to see its health and growth to remember that it once kicked me, mistaking me in the dark for an enemy. Bygones now may *safely* be bygones, and something more profitable can be done than doubting, quarrelling, and suspecting. Let every member induce his mate to join the association, and thus double the numbers of the society. Every 'outsider' is a source of weakness. Persevere to get every man into the union. Already your power is recognised and felt more than is admitted. Your cause is that of justice and public safety, and no man need be ashamed of such a cause.

"I have ventured to refer to the *weakness* of your society. I do so upon the principle that no garrison is safe which does not know and specially guard the points most open to attack. The weak point in your social army is the number of desertions. An immense number of men join your ranks and do not continue. These desertions are produced by two opposite causes. (1) There are men who join under the

impression that they are going to obtain an *immediate* rise in wages or reduction of hours; and these thoughtless persons, not getting all they desire, at once leave the society and abuse it for that lack of power that their own fickleness tends to produce. (2) There are men who join the society when some movement or memorial is on foot for the benefit of their particular section of employment. The movement, having been successful, they leave the society under the idea that they have got all they can. This is a most selfish mistake, because the duty of the society is not only to obtain improved conditions, but to guard and secure them after they have been got. The whole principle of industrial brotherhood and mutuality is trampled under foot by such men, whose conduct deserves the strongest reprobation.

“Before I lay down my pen I hope you will pardon an old friend of the working classes if I present for your consideration some questions besides those raised in your General Secretary’s report. They are rather questions of internal government than of external policy. And I would first ask you to consider whether your district management may not be made more economical without impairing the efficiency of the present plan? Secondly. Whether some general report of the number of employés, *not* at present members of the society, can be obtained, and, if so, if the reasons for non-union can be ascertained. Thirdly. Whether anything can be done to render the ‘Railway Service Gazette’ more thoroughly acceptable to the employés, and secure a greater power for it *as the organ of the Executive Council*. Fourthly. Whether the present system of electing the district secretaries as members of the Executive Council is not practically and theoretically wrong, inasmuch as it makes the paid servants of the association its governors and directors. The position is certainly unusual. Fifthly. Whether by some special levy or extra contribution a fund for special contingencies might not be raised to deal with events of an urgent character, this fund being kept at a certain minimum, and when reduced to be made up again by some future levy. Sixthly. Whether for the sake of consolidating the organisation it may not be politic to associate with your society, which is now simply a Trade Union, a sick and benefit society such as are associated with other trade societies.

“With all the best hopes for the society, and wishing it a happy and successful New Year,

“I am, your old friend,

“Faithfully always,

“50, Lincoln’s Inn Fields.

“J. BAXTER LANGLEY.

“December 24th, 1875.”

Manchester district in the whole history of the districts was the most businesslike of any, which is revealed in their annual reports of the districts. The first covers the period from the establishment of the districts in October, 1873, to September 30th, 1874; the second, the remaining period of 1874; the third, all 1875. All the work of the district stands out distinctly. The first five pages of the first

report contain a concise and accurate history of the society and what happened in the Manchester district, which had a large share of trouble. There is a keen business instinct in every page of it, and sometimes not a little quaintness. Here is one self-revealing instance of the lack of funds: "Proposed by officers and clerks, and seconded by Salford No. 2, and resolved: 'That a press and copying book be purchased as soon as funds will allow.'" All of them show care, forethought, and precision. This balance sheet contains no less than nine accounts, and the branches which gave returns and those which did not, with railway fares as low as 6d., the Executive Councilmen's expenses in London for four days being only £1. The president of the District Council was Thomas Wood, St. Helens Branch; vice-president, Joseph Rogers, Salford No. 3; treasurer, William Hall, Gorton. It covers eighteen printed pages. This is an extract from its forewords: "We have not done our work. Have we secured a fair day's wage for a fair day's labour for all? Have we promoted that good understanding which ought to exist between employers and employed? Are there none requiring legal assistance? Is Sunday duty justly and fairly arranged? Is it justly paid for? Are there no cases requiring arbitration? Is the superannuation of railwaymen fairly secured? Are our widows and orphans provided for? Are our maimed brethren cared for? And have we no remedies to suggest for the better working of our railways, the preventing of these fearful sacrifices of life and limb which are daily taking place?"

The third, covering all 1875, of eight printed pages, is equally a mirror of the doings of the district. This is an extract: "Brethren,—We have the honour to submit to you the third annual report of the district for 1875. At the end of the year we had thirty-seven branches, twenty-seven of which furnished returns to the district office; but ten have failed to carry out the resolutions of the district by not forwarding returns, thus rendering this report, we are sorry to say, incomplete. . . . We find that in 1874 we had 1,689 members in twenty-one branches; in 1875 we have in the twenty-seven branches 2,185, or an increase of six branches and 496 members. The secretary reports to this committee that in his visit to the north he found the railwaymen did not take that interest in our society as evinced by the men in other places, and as a consequence the men are working longer hours and receiving less remuneration. We also find from the returns rendered to us that in addition to the contribution the members are called upon to pay there has been collected for benevolent purposes the sum of £409 3s. 8d. The contributions of the members amount to £1,176 1s. 8d., and the whole of the expenditure to £226 10s. 10d., thus showing a net gain to the twenty-seven branches of £950 2s. 6d.; this in addition to the money centralised in London for the Superannuation and Legal Defence Fund. It is to be remarked that the society in this district has only been called upon to pay £55 0s. 1d. for donation, and for travelling relief, £8 7s. 6d., which, compared with other societies, is very small. We have six brethren who are now

receiving the benefits of the Superannuation Fund, at a total cost to the society of £78 per year. We find, according to the returns rendered, we have had twelve members killed during the year, leaving twenty-five orphans. We are pleased to say we have seven orphans in the Orphanage from this district."

The district committee meetings are recorded, where held, and by whom attended, and deals with the work they were engaged in. They formulated codes of rules for district, by-laws for branches, gave very excellent advice to branches for conduct of business, and are altogether a model of good sense, brevity, business acumen, and general foresight. If all the districts had done their work so well, so thoroughly, the work of the General Office would have been much lighter, and have released the General Secretary from immersion in branch business, enabling him to concentrate on other things. In a double printed page they give the names of all the branches, the meeting place, time, number of members, with the dates of meetings for 1876-7, with a financial summary of income and expenditure, which show the branches had to loan £40 17s. to carry on the work. Altogether it is a splendid little document. They finish up with: "Looking back on the ground over which we have travelled, and the many important changes effected by our unity, we have every reason for congratulation. We have, however, a great work before us; many reforms are yet needed, to effect which will require a firm and determined stand. Wishing you all success for the future.—We are, yours in the bonds of the Union, The Committee of the Manchester District, JAMES CORDWELL, District Secretary.

This sort of document, with two drawers full of letters, I have from some of these early pioneers. One gets to feel a passionate love for these dear old souls, who built so well, with so little educational ability, but much zeal, giving of their best, without fee or reward, to lift themselves and their fellows, laying the foundations of our union so firmly amid so much strife and impugned motives, from those who criticised with much zeal but little ability. My labour of love will be lost if the youths of to-day who may read these pages and who benefit by their thought and toil do not appreciate and revere their splendid manhood and efforts. It is we, not they, who come with rejoicing, bringing our sheaves with us. We have garnered where they have sown, and the fruits of their husbandry are many.

During 1875-6 Evans kept constantly before the branches and the public the question of accidents to railway servants, and never lost an opportunity of urging a Compensation Act in order to lessen accidents by making them costly. Evans, Cordwell, and Harford gave evidence before the Commission. The managers of the Midland sought to force on their goods guards the trip system, which the men successfully resisted. The London and South-Western enginemmen during 1875 obtained a reduction of hours from twelve to ten, with a slight increase of pay. The L. & N. W., taking advantage of trade depression, introduced a system of paying drivers and goods guards for only part of

overtime, but the men had to submit because not strong enough to resist, but, as Evans said in June, 1876, "The society is, indeed, doing a useful and a necessary work. Rarely has any movement had so many difficulties to contend with in its infancy, or accomplished so much within a short period; and certainly no Trade Union has ever effected its purposes in a more legitimate manner or by less objectionable means. That it wins and retains public friends who are influential and just is an indication that our path is a right one, and gives us encouragement to still push forward. Self-reliance is the lesson our society teaches to all railway servants. To them, as to others, the application of this lesson will be their greatest assistance. While it provides for emergencies and protects from oppression, the society is also gradually but surely bringing nearer to accomplishment reforms in the railway service beneficial alike to employer and employed, beneficial because just. To hasten the day of their accomplishment every railway servant should give a willing hand by joining our ranks." The first Sunday pay movement was started in 1875.

Persistently he kept before the members, however, the necessity of making it a fighting union, of making its finance adequate, and the society stable; and the Orphanage instituted was engaging the attention of the society to increase its usefulness. Up to this time there was not yet fixed an annual congress, and it became necessary to put its desirability to the test, and not having it called at the will of the E.C. or the members, and the wish for a Delegate Meeting was constantly being urged. So in September, 1876, a circular was issued to the branches asking "Shall a Delegate Meeting be held in 1877?" And in the circular was set out things that required the attention of a Delegate Meeting, with a form for recording votes. The copy before me is that issued to and returned by the St. Helens Branch, which had fourteen for holding it, and none against, and as an instance of how little the branches' interest was in the matter, there is this in the handwriting of the secretary: "At a summons (sic) meeting of our branch we only mustered fourteen in number, and they were all in favour of a Delegate Meeting.—(Signed) JOSEPH WILSON (Chairman), JOHN BLACK (Secretary)." The number of delegates was the largest that had ever met before or since, being 139, of which number only nine could not attend. They turned the rules inside out. The reports of that gathering occupied the greater part of the "Railway Service Gazette" from its issues from October 5th to November 2nd, with eight-page supplements. The names of the delegates are before me, but the only one living that I know is John Dobson, ex-Organiser. One who was present was W. Bell, one of Scotia's brilliant sons, a pioneer of the Edinburgh Branch, and who succeeded the first secretary (Anthony Radcliffe).

Also among that brilliant gathering was one who took a prominent part in the debates, with ideas clear, forcible, and reasonable, served under four General Secretaries, and at his death was the oldest official of the society. In legislation, administration, and in finance he did

much good work, corrected accountants in passing, wrung admission from them of his correcting abilities, keen, alert in all that he undertook, as one of the trustees of the Orphanage, worker for it, as E.C. man, Auditor, and Trustee for twenty-five years—John Pilcher. The meeting was at Birmingham.

That Delegate Meeting made an Annual Congress, so that henceforth it takes the form of an "A.G.M." Sixty was to be the number, and movable, and the Executive of thirteen was to be chosen from it, and was till, on the motion of Accrington, in 1884, this was abolished in favour of direct election by the popular vote. Superannuation, although it kept the form of 5s. per week, was limited in its operations, but otherwise kept intact, in spite of Evans' advocacy of change, and five years had to go, before the radical change came. The entrance fee was graduated. Evans told them that the then rules were a disgrace to the country; that, drawn by intelligent men, they should be made plain to the ordinary individual, and plain before any court.

The discussion for an Annual Meeting had opponents, because of the expense. Evans gave them a homily on the value of publicity, and if publicity did good the more they had of it the better. Men with good aims should welcome it. Abuses that ranked to high heaven would be all the better if they had the light of day turned upon them. "Expense!" he said with scorn, "expense for sixty men for three days; it was not worth putting the expense against the value. It should not be a bugbear, and unless the society took a forward stride, went heart and soul into Trade Unionism, fought hard, fought long, and fought often, and themselves stood erect in their manhood and strength, the sooner they relegated it to the list of benevolent societies and ceased to call themselves Trade Unionists, and removed the society from the list of Trade Unions the better." And he sarcastically battered those who said it would overthrow the E.C., which Battersea crowned by saying that they might as well say because they elected men to St. Stephens it overthrew local government.

They carried the proposal of sixty meeting each year, and then the economists proposed that each branch should pay its own delegate's expenses; and again Evans was on the warpath, telling them it was a vicious principle; that large branches or small, rich or poor, far or near, should have the inalienable right to nominate the man they thought best for the work; and it often happened that a small branch had an outstanding personality who was better than the best of the larger branch. Let ability, usefulness, and brains decide, not money. So that was rejected. But they did make a 3d. levy.

Then the "bugbear" of expense centred around the E.C., and criticism was levelled against them, which caused Ardwick to say the last and present E.C. had merited some abuse; but at all events they got it. Evans made a passionate advocacy for more frequent meetings of the E.C.; that in their decisions they should have the courage of their convictions, if they had any, and not place the onus of the defence

of decisions that were unpopular upon the Secretary. They should meet often and share the responsibility of government. "London men, let them be the E.C.," said some. "Who are the London men?" he asked. "Why, men who came from the country. Let them choose E.C. men from their own body, drawn from all, and make the E.C. in living touch with all. Let them be men in whom they could put trust, and they should not choose them unless they could trust them. Confidence in rulers was the essence of good government. Their society two years ago was not a tenth of what it was that day. Progress must be an unabated aim. They must either go back or progress, as it was progression or death, and he chose life rather than death. There must be no standing still in a society like theirs. Take from him, the one man, the responsibility for deeds done; throw it upon others, and then perhaps they would be better satisfied. But at all events the one man would not be the butt for all failures, and the successes claimed by others."

His eloquence both stung and convinced them. The election of the E.C. from among themselves proceeded. Those elected were: Edinburgh, 67; Aberdare, 61; Birmingham No. 3, 48; Sheffield, 43; Clapham Junction, 42; Edge Hill, 40; Nottingham, 38; Stratford, 35; Doncaster, 33; Cardiff, 30; Twickenham, 29; Camden, 27. On the proposal to abolish the districts, as formulated at Manchester, Evans said that at that time only Manchester, London, and Nottingham employed permanent secretaries. By a preponderant majority districts as at present constituted were abolished, but in their place they gave the districts an option to form districts for twelve months, to meet when the demand was, but not less than once a quarter. Four or more branches were permitted to form districts; branches containing less than 150 members to have one representative; more than 150, two. The secretary to be chosen from the district. The duties were: To secure by local co-operative effort the extension of the society; to settle local differences. The committee were to receive a fee of 1s. and third-class railway fare; the cost to come from the General Fund. The old district fund was transferred to the Central Fund. They also decided to bank with the National and Provincial Bank, which remained our bankers till the Co-operative Wholesale Society displaced it. The General Secretary's salary was fixed at £250, and he was empowered to engage assistance, the cost not to exceed £150 per year.

So far, Evans was heartened in his efforts for reform within. He was getting by inches what he asked for, and he put his full strength into efforts outside for the workmen's compensation without any neglect of the routine work of the office. So well did he do his work, that the Auditors (J. Taylor and W. Bowles) said, among other things: "Although the general work of office has increased in no ordinary degree our labours as Auditors have been considerably simplified by the greatly improved system of bookkeeping adopted by the General Secretary for the past year, whose new form of cash book contains ledger accounts of the



JOHN GRAHAM, First Organiser

various funds to be dealt with. The accounts of each recipient of Superannuation Benefit are not only agreeable to us as Auditors, but allow the checking of the payment to each individual, and will at any future time show at a glance the amount paid in each case. The system of bookkeeping instituted is such that it can be seen what amounts have been or should be remitted by each branch to the G.O. for every separate fund or account."

To give a fillip to a Compensation Act a meeting was held at Exeter Hall, February, 1878, at which Sir T. Brassey presided, and which brought 4,500 together, and excellent speeches were made. Macdonald, one of the two Labour members, had brought in a Bill, which was down for the Second Reading. This was designed to bring it before the public notice. Evans wrote to the Press:—

"The Second Reading of Mr. Macdonald's Bill, which took place on the 10th inst., gave rise on the following day to a scene of some interest in the House of Commons, and to Mr. Gladstone raising his voice against the Government using the forms of the House to shelve the question of admitted importance to workmen. Brassey championed in a vigorous manner. Lowe opposed. Tenant, a railway director, led the opposition to the Bill, supported by Henry Jackson and the railway directors and employers. The vote had to be taken by 5-45, and only five hours were available for discussion, yet Macdonald took an hour and twenty minutes and Burt took three-quarters of an hour. The Bill of Macdonald leaves us just at the same point as when the deputation waited upon the Government—that is to say, the Government are pledged to bring in a measure this Session, but of what sort remains to be seen."

A controversy went on in the "Times" over Lowe's speech. Earl De la War was one who had championed the cause of railwaymen in the House of Lords, and he advised Evans to take no further action until the terms of the Government were known. Evans said: "The Government are evidently overshadowed by the strong railway and employers' interests in the House of Commons."

In the meantime a battle was raging over the Orphanage and the society. Columns of the controversy appeared in the "Gazette," and the Secretary complained that in that organ they had been frequently subjected to criticism that was not true. One-third of the Executive were members of the A.S.R.S., and it was decided to bring the matter to a head by a conference, which so far from settling the matter only accentuated it, and the E.C. of the A.S.R.S. supported the statements of Cordwell and Hague, but the rupture was not then complete. Later it did come, but here Cordwell expressed what all felt, that they were fast losing hold of the institution which they themselves had set up. Nottingham said: "The companies would 'cut us out.' They had appointed Hall as secretary, and they desired to oust Vincent and us"; and "cut us out" they did. The following from

Evans to a Derby newspaper in reply to Hall, its then secretary, puts the history of the matter :—

“The Orphanage Committee, long since elected to disparage and condemn the influence which enabled Derby to possess a Railway Servants’ Orphanage by publicly washing its hands of any connection with the Amalgamated Society (as it had long before ignored its suggestions and depreciated its help). For this cause, I, as chief officer of the society, have avoided as much as could be any official contact or controversy with the secretary, Mr. Hall, or his committee. In my report to the recent A.G.M. it was my duty to give an explanation in regard to some objections to the society’s Orphan Fund established *within* the society; and also to institute a comparison between the merits of the Orphan Fund and the Orphanage, as some members, even at this date, confound one institution with the other. Notwithstanding that my remarks were addressed to members of a society with which the Derby Orphanage Committee had no connection, Mr. Hall, the secretary, has made them the groundwork of a letter to you, in which there is much personality and some misrepresentation, designed to arouse prejudices and occasion differences within our society. In this latter respect Mr Hall’s efforts are equal to anything attempted by his predecessor, Mr. Wills, and merit some notice from me.

“The reference to the Derby Orphanage in my report to the General Meeting is as follows : ‘I regret to notice that the objections of some of these branches are the result of favour for the Derby Orphanage. Active agents of that institution are among our members. There is ample scope for both institutions. The difference between them is that ours leans on self-help for its main support; Derby, on charity. Ours diffuses the help in the children’s home, helping each other alike; Derby bestows all its help on *one* child, separating it from the family. The help from our fund reaches *every* family of orphans of members who subscribe; that of Derby reaches only the *one* of the family elected by favour. Derby has spent two-thirds, or 67 per cent. of its income in building and management and but one-third on the orphans. Our fund will not entail 5 per cent. of its income on management, leaving 95 for the orphans. It is our contention that we should provide for our own orphans, and that it is a duty to do what we ourselves can do before appealing to strangers.’

“Does Mr. Hall in his letter controvert one single point of this statement? Yes, he declares that *two* of one family are admissible to the Orphanage, and that in practice this is the case extensively. I answer, that it is not the case in one admission in every six, and is therefore an exception, and not a rule. Further, that in each case in which *two* orphans of one family have been admitted it has been at the cost of excluding *one* orphan from another family, which, therefore, gets no aid, demonstrating still

more forcibly the inequality of the benefits, which is my point of reference. I have said nothing about *paid* agents of the Orphanage. I am not sure that these members to whom my observations applied are paid, though I am told that collectors do receive 10 per cent of all the orphans' money that passes through their hands. Mr. Rowlands, of Edge Hill, is a paid agent of the Orphanage; he is also one of the most loyal officers of the society, and as the members of his branch have cheerfully contributed to the Orphan Fund, the reference to agents in my report cannot refer to him. The society's standpoint is this: That members owe their first allegiance to the orphans of their brother members (it may be their own orphans), and that money subscribed for orphans should be spent on orphans in the manner best designed to assist the greatest number, and not wasted in expensive buildings or costly management. The Orphanage, as it now exists, is not the institution that the members of the society desired should be established, but what the Derby committee themselves have made it. Through the instrumentality of Mr. Wills, aided by Mr. Vincent, the society was at the very outset elbowed out of the management and direction of its own institution, which instead of becoming national has narrowed to a local institution. Mr. Hall's letter is most personal in its references to 'Mr. Evans,' which are not always accurate. When the society's Orphan Fund Committee met Mr. Wills at Derby in August, 1874, to draft a code of rules for the proposed institution, Mr. Evans was not the General Secretary of the society, nor a member of that committee. I was about paying a visit to Sheffield, on Mr. Harford's invitation, and met him at Derby on my way from Bristol there. I was not present nor consulted about the drafting of the rules. Indeed, neither Mr. Wills nor his friend Mr. Vincent concealed their annoyance at my presence in Derby, and they even questioned my right to be present at a meeting held in the Town Hall for inviting the Derby magnates to co-operate in the scheme. I was privileged to hear Mr. Wills read the rules drawn up by the committee, and at once objected to them because they designedly took from the society and its members and gave to Derby the control the society should have in an institution it was about to found. Here let me add, the E.C. of the society afterwards strongly disapproved of the drafted rules with a view to please Mr. Wills' friends at Derby. I have further to record that before a child was taken in or a shilling spent on building, I urged on the Derby Committee the wisdom and greater benefit of providing for some orphans in their homes, but my urging on this, as on every subject, was systematically overriden, and the predicted great expenditure and little benefit have resulted, and in my experience the society's views were never once favourably regarded nor even respectfully considered at the meetings. Mr. Hall says had Mr. Evans supported the committee in the work they undertook, etc., long ago there might have been a fund

provided for rendering help at home, etc. Is Mr. Hall serious, or is he dryly humorous at my expense? Until 1878 I did help the committee as much as the jealousy they and their officers entertained towards the society would permit of my doing, but so strong was the jealousy and prejudice that at every point my efforts were marred. Probably I have raised as much money for the Orphanage as any unpaid agent; but had I collected £25,000 through my influence it would have been insufficient to provide for 200 children on the expensive scale adopted, to say nothing of a fund. Much as I dissented from the management by the gentlemen at Derby, deeply as I felt the aspersions and contumely levelled by some of them at my society, I continued to help till in February, 1878, the chairman, Mr. Bailey, amid the applause of his colleagues, public denounced the association of the society with the Orphanage as an injury and impediment to the progress of the Orphanage. After this public expression of what I believe was the conviction of many of the committee, it left me no option but to resign my seat on the committee.

“Mr. Hall says that had Mr. Evans (and, I assume, the society) helped them wonders *might* have been done. Mr. Bailey declared that the society's, including, of course, my own, help was really an injury and an impediment to the progress of the Orphanage. Surely one of the two is in error on this matter. If Mr. Hall is right, Mr. Bailey is wrong, or *vice versa*. Which version will my readers believe? It is begging the question to try and throw the blame of the expenses on Mr. Wills. Mr. Vincent brought Mr. Wills to the E.C. of the society in July, 1874. The Council, influenced probably by Mr. Wills, pledged to raise a certain sum of money, resolved that he should be secretary from October 1st. But, mark this. In the interval which elapsed from the passing of the resolution to the 1st of October, the provisional committee had been formed at Derby, and Mr. Wills *begun* his official duties under the sanction and direction of the Derby committee; and so long as Mr. Wills devoted his energies to weaken the society's influence over the Orphanage, his conduct was disapproved of for the short time Mr. Wills was secretary, as since then each step in the project and its concomitant expense has been adopted at the instance and under the direction of the local gentlemen at Derby.

“Mr. Hall alludes to my name appearing on the London committee, and to the great expense incurred by it. The inference he would have drawn is palpable. This point has frequently been urged to my prejudice, and I am glad Mr. Hall reminds me of it. I have never had active connection, and have long ceased to have any connection whatever, with the London committee. Its establishment in the first place was a step taken in opposition to the A.S.R.S. The very expense now complained of by Mr. Hall is the price the committee paid to win over the agent appointed by the London Railway Servants Committee, and thus break up the

effort of the society in London to help the Orphanage. It was in this wise: The E.C. of the society appointed an Orphanage committee in London, on which all the branches were represented. That committee had begun its labours. A *fete* at Streatham had been arranged; others were in hand, among them one at the Crystal or the Alexandra Palace. Collections were arranged for. Mr. Bowles had been appointed the collector, and his remuneration was to be 2½ per cent. of all moneys collected. The Derby committee secretly sent Mr. Wills to London to override this effort of the society and to form a committee entirely independent of the society's effort. In order to carry this out and secure a local footing Mr. Wills tempted Mr. Bowles to transfer his services from the society's committee to that about to be formed for a salary of £2 per week, which Mr. Bowles accepted. This and other acts of the Derby committee, as was anticipated, broke up the Railway Servants' committee, and is now bearing fruit in excessive cost of collection. The Derby committee's jealousy of the society induced it to throw over the willing help of our London members and to create a committee of influential but indifferent persons, and whatever the result the credit or discredit rests with Derby. Why, then, connect my name with the failure of a scheme instituted and carried out in opposition to the society?

“Mr. Hall accuses the society of having deserted the Orphanage. Surely he is aware that having first got all the power the Derby people used it to expel the society from any participation in its government. The feeling that the severance of the two institutions was desirable always existed at Derby. It was expressed over and over again, and when the members of the committee believed its organisation was complete enough to do without the help of the society, then it ignominiously kicked the society. . . . The society has been true to its mission of helping the little orphans notwithstanding. Finding that it was hopeless to expect the Derby institution under existing management to extensively help the orphans, it resolved to do its duty to its own orphans and accord some help to every one of them who were made so by accident. While the years are rolling by waiting for the thousands of pounds required by the Derby committee little orphans are suffering want and hunger, or become inmates of our workhouses, and branded by society as paupers. The society saw that it had within itself power to feed, clothe, and save from reproach hundreds of little ones of our dead fellows, and it has nobly resolved to exercise that power by establishing an Orphan Fund. I am thankful that I have helped to bring this result about, and that the society by its Orphan Fund and Employers' Liability Act has been the instrument of doing more for railway orphans than any other agency in the kingdom. . . . There is no need to defend our Orphan Fund from Mr. Hall's insinuations. It speaks for itself. It is a ready means to a worthy end.”

The controversy continued covering columns in the paper, and Evans replied in nearly three. Vincent butted in, and Evans' reply to Vincent was brief:—

“Mr. Vincent, who declares he has no time for ‘controversialism,’ devotes a column to it. I leave him, however, in his fancied likeness to Nehemiah engaged in mending the walls of Jerusalem. I do not wish to drag him from his heavenly height to the reality of this wicked world of confusion, bad taste, and bad temper. Whether he fancies himself like unto Nehemiah, or unto Jeremiah, or to some other Old Testament worthy, good taste should preclude him from parading it to the world, which will judge him by his actions, not by his professions. There are some spoken of in Scripture who are not of the prophets, to whom members of the society may liken Mr. Vincent in his relations with the society and the Orphanage. I confess that my mind wandered to a revered character in ‘Pickwick’ on reading Mr. Vincent’s remarks on himself, and not to the scripture relating to Nehemiah’s struggle to restore the broken walls of the city of Jerusalem.”

Then to a lady: “A word to my friend ‘Jane.’ I never dispute with a lady.”

The essence of the whole controversy from Evans’ point of view was, that it was not the work of individuals, whether of himself or Vincent, in proposing things, or in the carrying out of plans. The suggestion might come from individuals, but it was the society, of which they were agents, and the society should have the credit that was its due. This led to the lifting of the Orphanage advertisement from the “Review.”

In January, 1882, Evans wrote:—

“I have received a long report, extracted from a local newspaper, of a meeting held at Derby to protest against the dismissal of Mr. Vincent from the office of travelling agent to the Railway Servants’ Orphanage. The chairman of the meeting, Mr. Benfield, is a well-known Midland driver, and he expressed himself strongly in disapproval of the conduct of the Orphanage Committee. It would appear from statements made at the meeting that the committee thus acted because the amount of money raised by Mr. Vincent’s personal exertions was insufficient to justify his continued employment as a paid agent of the charity.

“While Mr. Vincent has worked most loyally to promote the Orphanage, and took a prominent share in its original promotion, it would be too much to credit him with having founded the institution and formed all the local committees, as was done by his sympathisers at the meeting referred to. It was the E.C. of the A.S.R.S. which in April, 1874, authorised the first efforts to found an orphanage, and to this and the appeal made by the Executive and the loyal response of the 200 branches of the society and of thousands of individual members, the Orphanage at Derby

truly owes its existence. Hundreds of the early workers who helped to raise money knew Mr. Vincent only by name. They acted in deference to their attachment to the society. At this time Mr. Vincent himself was one of the district secretaries of the society and a member of the E.C. He so continued till 1877, when his services were sought by the Derby Orphanage Executive on the removal of Mr. Wills from the office of secretary. Inasmuch as the Derby committee induced Mr. Vincent to leave a settled employment, there should be strong grounds to justify their altered estimate of his value. We refrain from expressing any opinion on the merits or demerits of the course taken in this instance by the committee, and await a full statement of the facts before proceeding to any judgment on the case."

Later still :—

"It should be known that Mr. Vincent ceased to have any connection with the A.S.R.S. long ago; almost immediately after he resigned the office of paid district secretary. The loss of the influence of railwaymen in the management of the Orphanage, which Mr. Vincent now with good reason regrets, is greatly attributable to his own action in siding with the Derby committee against the E.C. of the A.S.R.S., when the latter strove for a real voice in the affairs of the institution. It would be unjust on our part to allow Mr. Vincent, Mr. Wills, or any other individual to take credit for establishing the Derby Orphanage without challenging their pretensions. The institution owes its existence solely to the influence, exertions, and organisation of the members of the A.S.R.S., and not to this, that, or the other person. It was by the action of the society's E.C. that the Home was opened early in 1875. In it there appears a great array of sums collected and subscribed by branches of the society during 1874 (scarcely one excepted), which together amount to nearly £3,000. Some of the district secretaries also figure in the list as successful collectors, but Mr. Vincent, strange to relate, is not shown to have placed one shilling to his credit as a collector up to that period, although he was then one of the society's paid officers. The time to which this list refers was that in which the original effort to found the Orphanage was, in truth, made. The moneys thus collected by the members of the society formed the foundation of the institution. Without them all the talk in the world would not have created the charity. I gladly recognise any real work done by Mr. Vincent, but in claiming credit for him for founding the Derby Orphanage, his friends are indiscreetly kind, while they do injustice to many willing workers for the little orphans."

The committee gave Mr. Vincent a gratuity of £75.

The Delegate Meeting granting Evans assistance was to come into force on April 1st, and so he told the E.C. in January, 1878, that he had the valuable assistance of John Graham; but he did not think it fair to Graham that he should have him working till midnight for

him without pay. So at the E.C. of March, 1878, he was appointed assistant to Evans, he being the only candidate for the post, which meant his resignation of what was now termed the "Travelling Secretary." For this secretary vacancy there were as candidates: Bowles, Bow; Duffin, Southampton; T. H. Haines, Stratford; E. Harford, Sheffield; I. W. Scott, Bristol. Duffin was appointed to the post. Influenced probably by the fact that Harford had resigned the district secretaryship he held previous to its abolition, the vote went against him. Harford also had money voted and handed to him for the debt of his district, but he used it, and was threatened with prosecution.

During this year the Scotch society started a little monthly journal of eight pages, and in the "Gazette" Evans gave a column of criticism on its matter and alleged facts, which caused that journal to come down in its wrath upon Evans, and libelled him, and on a threat of action it apologised.

On June 18th, 1878, a meeting was called by an anonymous circular inviting enginemen and firemen to attend and hear the promoters of a new scheme for their benefit. Some of these grades attended, wondering what this new scheme was. The secret was soon divulged when George Chapman, late Secretary of the A.S.R.S., took up the post of honour as chairman, and delivered an address advocating a society exclusively of enginemen, firemen, and cleaners. King, the active secretary of the South-Eastern Branch, being one of the audience, was ordered out because he was not one of these grades. Several members of the A.S.R.S. addressed the meeting, pointing out that their society satisfied all the wants of these grades, and that the friendly society of enginemen and themselves supplied all needs, and that any new society would be a useless and fruitless one. A collection was made to cover the meeting's expenses and to enable another to be called that day four weeks hence. At the bar of the Winchester Arms it was thought that it said much for Chapman's courage, after his experience of the Guards' Society, the Signalmen's, the Post Office Employés, the Dockyard Labourers', and the A.S.R.S. that he had assisted to start, all of which had failed, except the A.S.R.S., which had only been kept alive by sending him to a new sphere. The other meeting was held, but with little success for Chapman. But the very fact of his suggestions took root and led to the formation, allied with other causes, of two enginemen's societies, of which more will be heard in a later page. Evans, who was a close student of men's mentality, knew its danger, and met it with a very eloquent address, in which he showed an historical knowledge of what had been done before the advent of the A.S.R.S., his grasp of facts, and the lessons they brought with them.

The A.G.M. of 1878 at Liverpool was comparatively tame, after the excitement of all previous Congresses, and, indeed, the years that followed till nearly the end of the Evans' regime were, with one later exception, among the most uneventful in the history of the society.

The reason was not far to seek. The members were at work, and work is the best remedy against quarrelling. The most exciting incident of the 1878 A.G.M. was the personal one referring to Vincent. True, some wanted to revert to the old district system, but their arguments were unconvincing, and reason and experience were against them. Others proposed the abolition of travelling secretaries; another proposal that there be one; yet another that there be two, and finally, that when a vacancy occurred that it be not filled. A travelling secretary had been sent to Scotland. He went, and then returned without authority, and when asked why he did so naïvely replied that "It was not only the question of expense that caused him to leave Scotland." It was resolved: "That in the opinion of this meeting the action of Mr. Hague in leaving Scotland cannot be approved." They then appointed him to Bristol. After the meeting was over and thanks were being returned Hague handed in a note, that if they desired him to go to Bristol he must give them a month's notice. His resignation was accepted, with thanks for his past services. So again there passes from our history another early worker. The present writer has several of his letters, but they are valueless for the purposes of this history. His exit led to the re-employment of Edward Harford, which appointment was made by the E.C. on January 29th, 1879. This A.G.M. rejected a proposed Orphan Fund, which was renewed and carried by the 1879 A.G.M.

The year 1879 opened with the black cloud of the Midland guards' strike. The society was not responsible for it, and had only about 130 members concerned in it. They acted pluckily but unwisely in striking, and failed, as they were bound to do, as anyone with the least prescience could have seen they would. The society did what it could, but from the very nature of the circumstances it could not be much. Mr. S. Lazenby, secretary of the Kentish Town Branch and Treasurer of the society, has all the telegrams and correspondence of that strike from the men and sympathisers, some of which contains amusing attempts at poetry. Exeter Hall became the society's favourite sounding-board for great ventures and explanations of policy, where Evans answered Mr. Jenkins, chairman of the Strike Committee—himself not a railwayman—who had complained of the A.S.R.S. But the meeting was for other purposes, and Evans, who seemed to be at home there more than anywhere else, made an eloquent speech, which fills three columns of the published newspaper report. The meeting was a protest against the increase of hours and the reduction of wages that were going on. This passage occurs in his speech, which was characteristic of his efforts to make the union a thorough-paced one, and to lift it altogether out of the benevolent rut. He said: "You railwaymen, are helpless because you are disunited. Some of you know very well that if a man has the courage to speak up for his rights, or if he has the courage to be the representative of his fellows, he is dismissed from the service, and by the organisation of associated railways he is

prevented from obtaining employment with any other company. The only course left—I speak the words deliberately, and with great sorrow, for up to now our society has declared against strikes on a railway—is to organise yourselves together in order that you may inflict loss upon the companies, and then, and not till then, will your rights be respected.”

There is vigour and plain speaking in every sentence of that speech. This was not a solitary instance of his trying to show them how feeble, how timid, they were. His words rang out against their hesitancy to commit themselves to the declaration of a fighting attitude. So also he told the first E.C. of that year that their declared aversion to strikes and their foolish boast of being a non-striking union were unwise. The companies imposed upon them because of the limitations they had imposed upon themselves. He asked them to shake off their chains, to stand erect in their dignity and manhood; that it was better to be defeated as free men than to act as slaves. Strikes, said he, are justifiable, and are sometimes necessary; they are a means of asserting the claims of the workers. Strike when necessary, and strike hard; lift the ban and go in for aggressiveness and self-assertion. It required courage for Evans to say this, and he was never lacking in courage; if anything he was too courageous and too eager to have a fight with his enemies. He made enemies by the very audacity of his speeches and charges against those who stood in his way, and labelled them poltroons and cowards. In fact, in an earlier period, whilst the members were overloading Bass with compliments, he and Langley despised his limp political notions, and said so, and, to use Langley's favourite phrase towards him, “I am not going to bow down to wealth.”

It roused a storm, and he wanted a storm, as he wished to part the sheep from the goats. The old passions that had been evident when problems were discussed were now absent. He had already created a new sense, and had been changing opinions for five years. But this was different; it was not only a change of opinions, but the imparting of courage that he aimed at, which would act and react upon principle. So having sung his song he went on singing, in season and out of season, till it compelled attention.

So in March the “Gazette” came out with a leader: “The New Policy,” with very much watered whisky, that one might have been inclined to say it was all water. So again he carried his slogan before the E.C., in which he urged aggressiveness with vigour and picturesque phrasing, threw in as a supplementary the insolvency of the Superannuation Fund, and dealt with the society generally, saying: “Forward you must go.” So the old “Gazette” came out again with “The Future Policy of the Society,” and correspondence followed on the heels of that, one branch urging the members to throw away the old weapon “Defence,” used as a motto, and alter it to “Defiance.”

The war went on till the A.G.M. of 1879, and here came up a proposal in all its nakedness for a Protection Fund, and a lively

discussion ensued, because the E.C. had become a convert to the aims of Evans, or at least were charmed by eloquence into assent. They had issued circulars proposing to alter the policy of the society in regard to disputes between the companies and themselves, suggesting an obligatory and well-defined protection clause in the rules. The President Macliver, who, like Bass, was more Whig than Radical, almost shed tears over this proposed daring, and spoke of himself, Morley, and others who had ranged themselves on the side of the society, and threatened leaving it. He damned the proposal, which Evans treated lightly by saying that he and the President differed for the first time. And on the question of a Protection Fund Camden eventually moved: "That, seeing that the whole financial position has to be reviewed, the Protection Fund stand over until the next A.G.M." And, lo! and behold, it was so, save, of course, it would be discussed, and it was. It was a fatal policy.

Previous to this there had been an enginemen's movement, and though Webb had sacked some of the men and broken the agreement of 1872, they refused to have the assistance of the A.S.R.S. The idea was growing of a separate society for enginemen, and they became separatists on the rejection by the A.S.R.S. of a Protection Fund. To put it in Mr. Parfitt's own words: "Going back a little into ancient history, the majority would remember when the A.S.R.S. started in 1872. That society was founded for the benefit of all grades of railwaymen, locomotivemen included. They knew that the society did not receive that support which many thought it would receive, not only from the locomotivemen, but from all grades. It had its days of adversity, and the railway companies took note of what was going on, and for five or six years they, especially one of them, came heavily down on the locomotivemen and introduced new conditions of labour, which practically ruined those men. Deputations waited upon the directors and officials to try to get back the conditions of service they formerly enjoyed, but they found they were powerless as a body to accomplish it by themselves. Although in course of time their efforts met with partial success, it was evident that combination was needed to obtain those conditions of service which they ought to have. The question arose, why had not the locomotivemen joined the society? One answer was that the A.S.R.S. did not provide any protection for delegates. A still more prominent answer was the question of all grades. The locomotivemen would not accept a society which included all grades of railwaymen, whose wages varied 100 per cent., for, they said, they could not expect the lower-paid body to back up the higher-paid body in the manner they had a right to expect. There were, therefore, several locomotive societies started. There was the National Society, with contributions of 3d. per week, and another of 6d. per week, and these resolved themselves into the Associated Society at 1s. per week." I think Mr. Parfitt's rendering of history is perfect, save that of the words "several locomotive societies." This advertisement appeared in the Press, March, 1880: "Locomotive and Firemen's

National Union, established November 9th, 1879. Officers are appointed *pro tem*. A number of branches are formed and others are in the course of formation.—D. PHIPPS, L.E.F.N.U., Committee Room, Dee Street, Birmingham.” There is an advertisement of another as having four branches in existence, but the title is not as the Associated now is. Evans wrote in March:—

“The names of the two proposed enginemen’s societies are: (1) ‘Associated Society of Locomotive Steam Enginemen and Firemen’ and (2) ‘Locomotive Enginemen and Firemen’s National Union.’ I have not yet received the correct names of the other enginemen’s societies. I am wondering what ‘Associated Society’ means. For the information of members I may say that the first is promoted by ‘the Committee’ and the second by the Central Committee. The Associated Society declines to say where its branches are situated, for reasons you will understand.”

That was only Evans’ little playful way. But the facts of Mr. Parfitt are indisputable. The alleged lack of protection in the A.S.R.S. was not all, there was “a still more prominent question,” which was a mistrust of their fellows, a lordly superiority, and one with purely selfish aims. The lack of protection was the excuse of the new enginemen’s society; the assumption of superiority the cause. That, however, does not alter the fact that the A.S.R.S. blundered by not establishing a Protection Fund, which they altered the next year by establishing it, as in the later year of 1889, when they refused to pass a 3d. scale; but did the next year, when the G.R.W.U. had come into existence, between the two A.G.M’s. In both cases it was bolting the door after the steed had gone. So also the A.G.M. refused to establish an Orphan Fund, but did shortly after, when the joint control of the Orphanage came to the breaking point, the E.C. in July, 1879, saying: “That this Committee accept the report of the Orphanage Committee at Derby having reference to the severance of the society from the Orphanage, and regret that such a course should have been necessary.”

The year 1880 was the most vigorous in activity of any one year up to that time. During the last few years of the Tory Government Disraeli had been pushing his “spirited foreign policy” and so-called Imperialism. He and Lord Salisbury went to Berlin and brought back with them a treaty, which they termed “Peace with honour,” but which has been fruitful with trouble in foreign matters right up to the great war in 1914. Notwithstanding his boast of peace and honour, keen watchers of the political skies knew that his end was near. It was hastened by the lure of a successful Tory election at Southwark, and he dissolved Parliament, went to the country, and was routed by the Liberals, led by W. E. Gladstone, who, in his Midlothian speeches, riddled the Tory policy. The Liberals were committed by being pledged up to the hilt to bring in a Bill for compensation. Evans had circularised every constituency and every candidate, and the favourable replies, and those which were half-hearted and refused to pledge, were all published.

Evans' activity during this election was amazing. He was a Radical by political conviction, and his party was pledged; and here was a double reason why he should work; and he did. The Liberal Government made it their foremost measure in 1880. The Bill was the one that Brassey had previously brought in as a private measure, when Disraeli's Government was in power, which was drafted by the A.S.R.S., and Brassey was now at the Admiralty in the new Government. When the dissolution came Evans set to work and circularised every known candidate in the United Kingdom, besides sending out circulars to the branches. All the replies were published. The replies cut diagonally across parties, with this fact, however, that the Liberals were preponderantly in favour, and a few of the Tories. Evans threw his shafts at foes, explained to and encouraged his friends. Amusing are some of the replies. One of them was from Lord Claud Hamilton, who was standing for the steady little Tory borough of King's Lynn. His lordship replied that he had been advised by old politicians not to reply to printed circulars. Evans humorously replied that he was sorry, and had he but known that his lordship had such a deepseated objection to printed matter he would have written it out before sending it.

Lord Claud was defeated, but found a safe seat at Liverpool, where, in the closing days of 1880, he spoke in favour of the Derby Orphanage, when he announced to the audience that he had been in the Army, but had been for nine years a railway director, and he could say that anybody who in after years joined any railway company would find that an early Army training was extremely useful in dealing with those with whom he was brought in contact. There was about the railway system and the working of it a very great fascination for the old Army man. What they relied upon in the Army above all things was discipline and obedience to the orders of superiors. That showed the bent of the speaker's mind and explains the long list of union victims on the Great Eastern which comes up in a later page. His lordship then traduced the Employers' Liability Act, urged moderation and good sense. The fond controversialist, Evans, gives this: "Lord Claud John Hamilton, M.P. for Liverpool, has been enlightening railwaymen on their duty. Lord Claud has been in the Army. His first commercial experience was in connection with railways—and actually his lordship 'likes it more and more.' Lord Claud probably owes his connections with the Army, with railways, and with Parliament to the same cause—the accident of birth. Had he been a Jones instead of a Hamilton the world would have been in ignorance of his existence, and the railway world would have been spared the gratuitous nonsense his lordship dignifies by the term 'advice.' Let any clear-headed man read his lordship's speech and he will ask himself what in the world does Lord Claud mean? Is he in favour of the Act, or does he prefer insurance? Does he approve of Mr. Moon's method of coercing men to evasions of the Act? Or is his lordship opposed to any attempt to invalidate the intention of Parliament by a misuse of the liberty of contract?"

This is given not to show the historian's known love for his lordship, but as a specimen of how, before the passing of the Act and after, Evans was anxious to defend the gestation period and the life, when born, of the Act. It was his child. Before its passing he was in conflict with all Labour, traduced the two Labour M.P.'s, and also other budding ones, swung his shillalah about with surprising vigour, and very often unnecessarily threw down the gauntlet to friends. He was no fair-weather controversialist, but would throw at them eloquent periods rounded off with some apt scriptural quotation or a witty phrase like this of Gooch: "Sir Daniel coming to judgment." The writings of Evans, with his speeches of this period, would require quite 200 pages of this book in defence of his offspring. He interviewed friends, drew up terms of amendments, suggested tactics, mercilessly thrashed objectors. At that time "let a bear robbed of her whelps" meet a man rather than Evans in his fiery ardour. Hundreds of speeches were made explaining and defending the Act. It was the fruition of six years of exceeding hard labour. Succeeding Acts have followed, and the merits of all are due to Evans, or, as he would say, so jealous was he of the society when personal favours were pitted against it, the A.S.R.S.

One danger beset its passing. J. G. Dodson, who had it in charge, had been elected for Chester, but had been unseated for corrupt practices, and though J. Chamberlain, the President of the Board of Trade, had taken charge of it, it looked as if it would be dropped, but the borough of Scarborough was placed at Dodson's disposal, and he accepted it, went back to the House, and the Bill was passed with a special clause for certain forms of railway workers to protect them against the doctrine of common employment. When it went to the House of Lords the leading opponent was Lord Brabourne, known in the Lower House as E. Knatchbull-Hugessen, whom Gladstone had sent to the Lords, and upon him Evans again steeped his pen in gall. The protagonist for the Bill was Earl De la War. They amended it, and the clause was restored. So that at the A.G.M. of 1880 Evans, detailing the work with regard to it, said: "Notwithstanding some limitations and restrictions saddled on the original draft to appease the opposition of the employing interest, it is a great concession to the demands of railway servants and other workmen. It is, in fact, with the exceptions alluded to, a measure which the society determined three years ago was as broad in its provisions as Parliaments could be expected to sanction or public opinion approve. The disposal of the Bill was, for the third time, entrusted to your General Secretary. That meeting, under the chairmanship of G. Boon, decided to present Dodson with a testimonial, and Evans, Boon, Harford, Graham, and Herbert, an engine driver, presented it."

The greatest battle raged on insurance and common employment, and the E.C. had told Gladstone that they would rather the Bill was dropped than to make insurance compulsory, as it would give the companies the legal right to use the men's wages for that and so escape financial as well as legal liability. That whoever by word or

deed jeopardised the intent of the Bill, whether it might be the error of a friend or the intent of an enemy, was doing disservice, and so after the passing Evans asked the men to guard their first charter of safety from danger by all means, and to "stand by the law."

Dodson became lost in the title of Lord Monk-Bretton.

The Annual Meeting passed the following resolution: "That this meeting, fully cognisant of the value of insurance, and anxious for its extension as a provision against the eventualities of life, cannot accept mutual insurance against accidents by employers and employed as a substitute for the legal liability of the employers, and warn the members of the railway service not to contract away the protection afforded them under Mr. Dodson's Act in return for any gift proffered by a company to the provident or insurance to which they may belong; and further, in the event of the companies forcing their servants to contract out of the operations of the Act, the E.C. is directed to take steps to render such contracts illegal by enactment." The Protection Fund was adopted by forty votes to thirteen, the full sum to be £35. It was discussed whether the Orphan Fund should be optional or compulsory, and compulsion was decided on, and that of extending it to all members' children instead of to those only whose parent met with death by accident. It was decided to defer the matter for another year to give the then system a fair trial. The abolition of everything was brought forward, as before, but the meeting would abolish nothing, but cowardice. The same remarks were again made as to Evans being the society. Thus: A delegate said there was an idea abroad that the General Secretary was "the moving spirit of the E.C.," and that official interjected "And always will be!" which was received with cheers. The delegate: "It was said that the E.C. had no will of their own." ("Oh, oh.") The General Secretary said a power was attributed to him which he did not possess. He had no vote on the Executive. He expressed his opinions, and it was for the Executive to vote as they pleased and take the responsibility on their shoulders. The meeting set a movement in motion for a reduction of hours.

No sooner was the Employers' Liability an Act than attention was given in a wider sense for the prevention of accidents, and the reduction of hours and more efficient brake power were two of the means. Earl De la War had again and again brought the question before the House of Lords. Macliver, the President, who had wooed Peterborough, Glasgow, and other places, had at last been elected for Plymouth, but for all the value he was to us might as well have been outside the House as in it. Every time an accident occurred the brakes question came up in Parliament, and when Mr. Channing was elected he became in the Lower House what the Earl was in the Upper House, and these gentlemen were our two best friends. Evans, with his prolific pen, wrote articles upon it. Clement E. Stretton made the subject his own, was unwearied in his advocacy, and visited scenes of accidents. So a public sense was created, because newspapers generally only publish what their readers want, and they wanted this, and the papers boomed the question.

On December 9th, 1880, a deputation from the society waited upon Mr. Chamberlain as President of the Board of Trade to urge what the Royal Commission on Railway Accidents had strongly urged, of discretionary power being conferred upon the Board of Trade, to be exercised subject to an appellant tribunal. Evans and Galt were the spokesmen, and the Press gave it an extraordinary fillip, which was the best boom for the object that had yet been. The speeches and reply of Chamberlain occupied over three newspaper columns. Chamberlain showed an intimate acquaintance with the subject, and was very sympathetic, though at the end of his speech he said he had hoped that the railway companies would have done voluntarily what the railwaymen and the Government had a right to expect from them, and that up to the present their action had been unsatisfactory to his Department and to him personally, and if his expectation was not realised and the companies set their backs against the wall, defied public opinion, and absolutely refused to be guided by the recommendations of the Board of Trade, then there would be no alternative but for the Government to lay their statement of the case before Parliament and ask for such powers as might be necessary.

The "Times," "Daily Chronicle," "Daily Telegraph," and the "Standard," with other papers devoted sympathetic utterances in lengthy articles to the subject, and from that day the battle waged and raged, and some journalist hit upon the alliterative phrase, "The Battle of the Brakes." Earl De la War brought in a Bill, and that helped yet more. The Press war lifted it largely out of our hands, and it was better for railwaymen that it did, because it became a public question, and in the public wish was our own. During July, 1881, the Earl brought the matter again before the Lords, showing that only ten out of the sixty-one English companies had complied with the wishes of the Board of Trade, as expressed in their circular issued in August, 1877. Five of the Scottish companies had some regard to the Board's view, but not one of the Irish had deigned to notice. Lord Sudely, for the Government, put up a defence, which was very lame. On March 20th, 1882, the Earl brought forward for Second Reading his Brakes Bill, the discussion on which was helped by the Board of Trade Inspector's (Colonel Yelland) report on an accident at Blackburn. The Earl did not advocate any particular brake, and was careful to say that the scope of the Bill for compulsion was outside the question of whether the Westinghouse, Clarke, Fay, Smith, Clayton, or Webb's was the best. The Bill was afterwards withdrawn, but all helped to foster the agitation that was in full swing.*

The pressure of the good work that Evans had done did not allow him to bring out his balance sheet for 1879 till nearly the end of 1880, but which was not printed. A testimonial was organised, to be presented on the 1st January, 1880, the day of the Employers' Liability Act coming into operation. It was presented at the Memorial Hall,

* For a description of this, see "Life of John H. Dobson," Chapter IX. King's Cross Publishing Company, 205, Euston Road. Price 1s.

Farringdon Street. The chairman of the meeting was S. Morley, M.P. The testimonial was an illuminated address, with a cheque for 200 guineas. Morley and the Mayor spoke of the splendid work Evans did for the passing of the Act. Evans, in reply, expressed his gratitude to those of his fellow workmen who from their hard earnings and thrift had helped to recognise what services it had been his pleasure and his duty to render to their cause—the cause of common humanity. He thanked Morley for the encouragement he had given him many years ago. He was at that time a servant of the G. W., and his advocacy of this and other claims had brought upon him the ire of the company, and they had given him the chance of resigning from the union or leaving their service, and when he refused to leave the union they gave him a month's notice. He lived at Bristol, and during the 1874 election their friend Mr. Morley had just been triumphantly returned as Member for that city. The people had taken the horses from the carriage and were drawing him past the station, and he (Evans) hearing a band, walked out of the station. Mr. Morley saw him and asked him, "Is it true the company have discharged you for advocating the men's cause?" He told him it was true, when Mr. Morley said: "Don't let that trouble your mind. I will see that you have a situation equal to the one you have lost." Although he had never availed himself of the kind offer made to him, he felt that such an expression coming from a man like Mr. Morley should be an encouragement not to give way but to persevere. He need not record how the battle for this Act had been won. It had been won by moderation, the force of argument, and the weight of facts. The Bill was now law.

During 1880 a very ephemeral association of railwaymen sprung up at Liverpool and spread to other places. It called itself "The Alliance," and had as its President Samuelson, M.P., a really good fellow but who mistakenly thought by his action he was rendering railwaymen service. It wanted to do things on the cheap. All the officers were unpaid, and the contribution was 1d. per month. Finding it could not do its work with the humble penny per month it was increased to 1d. weekly, when the process of dry rot set in, and Samuelson advised them to join the A.S.R.S. As an instance of his public spirit he brought a case against the L. & N. W. Company, charging them with intimidation with regard to the Employers' Liability Act for doing what the men had the perfect legal right to do. On hearing the first case the stipendiary gave the company the benefit or the doubt on account of the high character of the directorate, but on the second case fined them 40s.

During the year 1880 John Graham, who had served the society from its commencement with conspicuous ability, resigned his position and set up in the watch trade at Clerkenwell, and also sold an electric pen he had invented for manifold writing. He became secretary to the Radical League, but a little later, whilst still carrying on his business, he sub-edited the "Railway Review."

Chapter XI.

THE PASSING OF THREE GREAT PERSONALITIES.

FROM the time when Evans assisted in the raid, right to the time he left us, he never ceased to urge a union sound financially, a fighting and effective force for whatever the need. His letters previous to his election were not likely to win him votes; they were in the nature of manifestos, and he never swerved from the aims enunciated in them. He never rested till he had destroyed his own child, the districts. Good they were for the purpose formed, but they had waxed old and were ready to vanish away. The society's Executive, even after the reformation, was composed with two exceptions of ex-railwaymen, which is but one instance out of many of the great factor of timidity, and with the district secretaries as part of it, there was not that impelling force or free criticism which is the product of a healthy community, and there was an abundant opportunity, had they not been honest, of moving in their own interests. With Evans' advent there was an abundant publicity. Apart from the circulars he sent out, which were about 25 in his first year, dealing with internal matters, he wrote articles in the "Gazette," and seemed desirous not only to give the fullest possible publicity, but to invite healthy discussion. When we enter the period of his secretaryship it seems like passing into a new world. Order takes the place of chaos; discipline lays her hand upon malcontents who refused to come to heel. He was a business man to his finger tips, an idealist, an eloquent speaker, and clear writer. He knew what he wanted to do and took the right steps to its accomplishment, and he had deep in his heart a real love for the society, and wished to make it an effective instrument for the work he had in plan. The anomaly of an Executive with only two railwaymen on it must cease, and those who decide the responsibility of railway work must take the risks of government, and he suggested reform. London No. 2 moved: "That in the interests of the society it is not desirable that any member should hold office on the Executive Council and be district secretary at the same time, and hereby resolves that in future elections district secretaries should not be eligible for the Executive." Stratford seconded it, and, after a good debate, it was withdrawn. He had brought reason with him. Discussion was beginning to take the place of passion, courage came with slow, tardy footsteps, but it did come in time. In the first week of 1876 Evans wrote: "The new year has come, and its advent finds the society more hopeful and with better grounds for hope that the future will be more successful than the past. Many of

our sterling members have left us, some by violent death, others from causes common to our human nature. May goodwill grow with the young year, and it will teach the lesson that each member owes a duty to his fellows, and that our profession of brotherhood is a reality, speaking in its every day acts." He also reminded them of the forthcoming Annual Report for 1875 and the necessity for the branches giving the information to render it complete, and an exact reflection of the society in membership and finance. A few days later the E.C. met at the Christopher Wren, and, though the balance sheet of 1874 was issued late in November, the one for 1875 was in conception. They had paid more away in benefits for 1875 than in any year with the exception of the strikes of 1872-3, 200 members having received Donation Benefit at one time and the funds were draining away. Many of the recipients were not bonâ-fide railwaymen, and he raised the question of the undesirability of their admittance to membership, which was determined long years after, as he viewed it and wanted it. Legal expenses had been heavy, but this was a function of the union which had immense possibilities beyond the success in legal actions. Deterrence was safety for railwaymen and would force forward a Workmen's Compensation Act. Langley's loan had at last been paid, and that gentleman looking in upon the E.C. was warmly received. One hundred and ninety branches were recorded as then being in existence. They considered also the desirability of extending the society to Scotland. Branches had discussed and, on his advice, they reconsidered the district system, and their tabulated opinions showed there was little or no return for the large amount of money expended in maintaining it. It jeopardised the future benefits of members, absorbing from £1,000 to £1,200 per annum of its funds, so that to extend the society's operations, or even to strengthen the branches, they could not be rendered assistance if those branches had a tendency to weakness and needed assistance. The system was valueless. Where success had been obtained it was due to local influence and exertion alone, nor was the system in any way now essential to the society's well-being. Langley addressed the E.C., renewed, as they termed it, the friendship and good feeling which had once been, and he also gave them excellent advice concerning many things, including the district system. He said it had been established, as Evans had said, to remove power from London, and it had given the needed impetus and the salvation sought. Evans, following, said: "Divergent districts led to divergent policies, when they wanted as never before, unity of aim and action." A proposal to abolish the system was lost by one vote

Directly on the heels of the E.C. came the General Meeting at Bristol in January, 1876, at the Midland Inn, Phillip Street, which was presided over by Canon Jenkins. At that meeting Sheffield proposed the abolition of the E.C., but it had only one vote in favour. Evans asked not for the abolition of the E.C., but more frequent meetings. He could not act for want of decisive authority, and they also turned down a proposal to make E.C. meetings movable. Evans urged that not only should

they have more E.C. meetings, but that the members should take upon themselves the responsibility of their decisions. As it was, the popular ones they claimed credit for, but the unpopular ones were fastened upon the General Secretary. He said there should be collective responsibility. Any decision come to was theirs, and they should brave the criticism that followed, and not place the responsibility upon him, when he had only given advice, whilst they made the decisions. On the motion of Bow and Stratford, it was decided that a permanent Committee be formed from the London district, to meet every two months, and give the Secretary advice between the meetings of the E.C. This was carried by a majority of two. It was proposed to reduce the delegate fee of 12s. 6d., but that was lost, and third-class fare was carried. Battersea, as the premier branch, moved: "That the General Secretary shall be re-elected to office unless a charge, or charges, shall be brought against him of sufficient gravity to warrant his dismissal, and to elect another in his place." It was defeated, but what has been a permanent feature was carried: "That instead of holding office for twelve months he shall remain in office during the will and pleasure of the members, who should, through the E.C., have power to call upon him to resign, and that he should be, and remain, a member of the society while he held office." All branches not forwarding dues were to be reported to the E.C. and dealt with accordingly. With regard to the General Secretary's salary, Battersea and others moved £150. Sheffield and others moved £200. The North London delegate, who announced himself as a Trustee, urged that it should be £250, and that he pay for any assistance required, which proposal was carried.

With regard to districts, there were proposals for abolition and varying numbers. Evans urged them to go slowly; things which were lawful might not be expedient, and a reduction would be a better way to their final abolition, because improvement or abolition would go by results. Bow moved that there be eight districts, and it was carried, with a majority of two, to have two E.C. men from each, five to form a quorum. This meeting claimed distinction by rescinding its own resolutions and substituting others, and this last decision was re-submitted, when they, again by a majority of two, carried six districts. The E.C. representation question was also re-submitted, and the reconstructive proposals were that there should be one representative for each provincial district and two from London, which was lost by a majority of one. The proposal for one representative from each district resulted in equal voting, the President casting his vote against, and being re-submitted, it was decided in favour by a majority of twelve. None but *bona-fide* members was to sit on the E.C. The final matter of the Secretary's election was brought forward by Pontypool, who complained that 132 votes of his branch had been rejected, but after a lengthy discussion, Pontypool was satisfied with what they had heard, that the findings had been honest, but regretted their secrecy, and it was carried, with one vote against, that they had acted rightly. They

decided to make the Birkbeck their bank. There was a lengthy discussion on the Superannuation Fund, and Evans told them that the fund was insolvent; so they decided that the matter should be brought before the branches and ask them to consider the desirability of increasing the rate of contribution in order to make it solvent. Then Evans declared the society as a whole absolutely insolvent, and showed them that an increase in the premiums was a necessity. If they did not they would have to ask themselves whether the society could go on at all.

Canon Jenkins had been unable to attend the first day through illness, and suggested that he should be Vice-President, as he wished to retain the affections of the railway service. It was suggested that there should be a permanent Chairman when the President could not attend. There was a proposition that Langley should be President, but it was eventually decided that Canon Jenkins should remain President. During the discussion, Evans said that Langley was willing to do anything he could for the society, and Langley's assistance to him whilst he had been Secretary was very great, and that he had never missed an opportunity of lending him a helping hand in forwarding his work. It was decided to have a password for the branch meetings, the E.C. to arrange its institution.

It is amusing to read of the various proposals for a motto on the front of the rule book. "Defence, not defiance," "United," "United we stand, divided we fall," and yet another, "Heaven helps those who help themselves," but nowhere in the records is there a suggestion to add the words, "but heaven help those who are caught helping themselves." They proposed an "optional levy" of 6d. It is noteworthy that for the abolition of the district system Bristol Nos. 1 and 2 were against change. It was in that district where it originated. But they took the power to dissolve insolvent districts, so Evans was gradually getting his way. The following are specimens of the election for E.C. and district secretaries. This one is for the West of England: Harford, 521; Wyatt, 397; Watts, 164; Saunders, 107; which is for the E.C. Nottingham No. 3 District: J. Hague, 381; A. Holland, 255; Sleigh, 278; F. Banister, 257; H. C. Mady, 233. For district secretary: Hague, 464; Banister, 240; Holland, 203; Mady, 173. Hague and Holland were the E.C. men. No. 4, the Central or Welsh District: Vincent, 339; G. Waine, 273; J. Marries, 175; A. Briggs, 133; S. Wyatt, 50; Milling, 29. Vincent and Waine are E.C. men.

German Waine was the originator and life of the movement for a ten-hour day on the L. & N. W. The districts are grouped as an appendix in the rule book of that period. There was a great competition for the London Council, and names appear in it that went far down in our history. Boon headed the list, Pilcher being the eleventh on the list; Storkey, of Battersea, was one, and there is among them the not unfamiliar name of Cramp.

The year 1876 sped on. Evans worked hard with reference to the

Royal Commission. Harcombe, a goods guard in the Taff Vale, was dismissed because of the evidence he gave and the Government failing to protect its witnesses, and a lengthy controversy ensued with regard to it, Lidell, the Secretary of the Commission, suggesting a law case with reference to it. This struck terror into many and evidence hung back as a result, and Hague and Cordwell wrote him that the men were deterred by fear. "Afraid," said Evans. "Afraid to sign even a memorial to the Royal Commission. Of what need they be afraid? Are they not more afraid that, owing to their apathy, should they be taken away their wives and children will be left with no remedy for the loss sustained in their father's death? Why should any man be afraid to do so simple a duty as signing a memorial true in every letter? It is possible to urge the excuse of fear so far as to win for the excusers' mates well-merited contempt, and our members are not very tolerant of this practice when it is carried too far." Langley was again putting in an appearance at branches and praising the work of Evans, and otherwise doing good work, and Evans wrote in the dying days of the year 1876 that the year had been a bad one for Trade Unions, but the A.S.R.S. had stood the test well. "The gloomy forebodings of half-hearted friends, or secret opposition, that the society was but a temporary fleeting fancy, doomed to an early death, are far from being fulfilled. On the contrary, we bid farewell to 1876 with a stronger faith in our principles and more tangible proofs of the society's usefulness, and the earnest attachment towards it by an increasing number of railway servants. Difficulties have been overcome which would have wrecked many societies, funds are accumulating, the organisation is more effective and controllable, more democratic, continues to win friends, and to dispel the dread of strikes which many entertained when our society began. Proof has been repeatedly given that our association is governed by the good sense of its members, and is a standing threat to no good thing, to no right of our employers, but only to those evils which are a burden to the servant who has to bear them and are of no benefit to the employer in whose fancied interests they are maintained. The more useful the more powerful, and a careful extension of the benefits will ensure for the society a strength great enough to resist any outward attacks on it if there is harmony and a true unity prevailing within. It cannot be too often urged that concord within the society is its surest strength, and that without it no progress can be made." The article covers three newspaper pages, and in it he refers to Canon Jenkins' death, the Royal Commission on Accidents, legal cases, and so on. The article was only in keeping with the many hundreds he wrote. The death of Canon Jenkins left the Presidency vacant, and the question was on whom should the mantle of the old dead saint fall.

The following to the E.C. from Evans will explain all :—

"Viewing all the circumstances, I have ventured to recommend to the patron of the society, to the districts, and finally to yourselves Mr. P. S. Macliver, of Bristol, Glasgow, and London, a person

eminently qualified for the greatest honour, but one we can confer upon any friend of the society. Mr. Macliver is a gentleman of about 55 years of age, a man of letters, and with an exceptional knowledge of men and things. He is an able writer, a fluent speaker, and practical thinker. He is the proprietor of the 'Western Daily Press,' and of the 'Observer,' and, I may remark, first established the penny Press in the Western Counties. As a business man he has been most successful, and has now partially retired from active pursuits. He is a large shareholder in railways, and has on the Bristol and Exeter Railway given proof of his sympathy with the men by obtaining, in defiance of the directors, a vote of £1,115 and £800 respectively for old servants and to the locomen on the occasion of the transfer of that line to the G. W. He has, moreover, manifested the greatest interest in the welfare of our society in the West of England, and much of the success there is attributable to his kindly assistance. Mr. Macliver is, and has been, a professed supporter of the principles of Trade Unionism. His own employés are Trade Unionists. He presided over the public meeting of the Trades Union Congress at Glasgow, October, 1875, and is, further, the choice of the Glasgow Trades Council, as the most fitting person to represent them in Parliament. It would be satisfactory to Mr. Bass. Dr. Langley, though hardly pressed by many friends to accept this office, preferred to see the unanimity of the society, and readily consented to support Mr. Macliver. Dr. Langley is disinterested in this matter, and the influence he has exerted to secure peace within the society deserves especial mention. As the government is incomplete without a President, I felt it my duty to bring this subject forward, and in writing to Dr. Langley to ask him to preside in the absence of a President."

There had been a falling-off in the Notts district among the Midland men, Nottingham, Toton, Staveley, and others suffered heavily owing to the goods guards' strike and the terrorism adopted by the Midland officials. The Norwich Branch and others had closed.

We must now go backward and forward to note the passing from among us of three great personalities: Canon Jenkins, by death, Charles Bassett Vincent by resignation of district secretary and afterwards expulsion from the society, and Dr. Langley to prison. The passing of "the dear old Canon," as he was affectionately termed, cannot better be described than by the use of Evans' pen:—

"He died on November 11th, 1876, at the Vicarage, Aberdare. In the death of Canon Jenkins the society suffers an irreparable loss. We have lost a most sincere and unostentatious friend. Not only have the members of the society lost a friend, but the whole railway service. No one had a greater claim to the gratitude of railway servants than the simple, kind clergyman whom we all loved, and who was laid in the cold grave on Tuesday last. The latter part of his life has been a chapter of kindly acts and personal sacrifices for the happiness of the working

classes, and more especially the railway servants and the Welsh miners, who had long learned to reverence the good man and look to him for kindly counsel and assistance. Sad hearts and tearful eyes at many a station and hillside home will tell the estimate in which Canon Jenkins was held, when the news is told that he is no more. He was ever tender-hearted, ever gentle and amiable, always full of sympathy for those in trouble or distress. No labour was too hard for him, no sacrifice too great, if it could but minister to the happiness of others. This was the great aim of his life, and he believed it his duty also; and right well did he perform it. Before the society existed our late President was known as the 'Railway Apostle' on account of his ministrations to the sick and dying railway servants, their wives, and families, whom, he quaintly said, had no parish and required someone especially to care for them.

"On the G. W. R. he was better known than any officer of the company. The walking sticks he used were dearer to him than gold; they were both gifts to him from the railway servants at Oxford. It was his practice when riding on the G. W. to either ride on the engine or in the guard's brake-van, and this practice was never objected to by the officials, who all greatly respected him. His conduct as Vice-President and President of our society won for him the confidence of all the members. He had the greatest faith in the judgment and discretion of the officers and members of the society. It was one of his maxims that the members knew best the requirements of the society, and their self-government was the only practical and beneficial form. Never once did he put his own opinions forward except when his kindly counsel was sought for, and he was extremely jealous of any interference with what he deemed the exclusive right of the members to manage their own affairs. Having the confidence of all, his influence was great, and was ever used in promoting true union within the society by teaching the lessons of kindness and goodwill to each other. In the dissensions which at one time unhappily divided the society he was the peacemaker. No one who was present at that Manchester delegate meeting can ever forget his deep anxiety during that somewhat stormy week. He could neither eat nor sleep, so anxious was he to steer the society out of the troubled water and dangerous shoals which surrounded it at that period. No guide less kind could have succeeded as he certainly did succeed. Afterwards when faction again raised its head at the E.C. his kind, anxious voice subdued the anger which existed, and his text, 'Let bygones be bygones' soon united the majority of the members on the side of peace and goodwill. But why recount instances; all his efforts were in the same direction, and silently, but surely, his kindly influence worked a radical change in the society, and we began the better to realise that a member's first duty was friendship to his fellow member. The last time our President presided at the E.C. was on January, 1875. The cruel disease from which he suffered had already made serious inroads upon his health, and he was too ill to be with us all the

time. Such was, however, his anxiety for the welfare of others that he forgot his own. It was always so with him. It is hard to think we shall never see him again, or meet him, or receive that kindly aid or counsel when difficulties beset us. The pleasure which lit up many a weather-beaten railway servant's face on meeting the 'Canon' cannot recur from the same cause. Thousands will miss his manly form, his revered face, and long, white, flowing beard, the genial smile, and the gentle voice, which had never but kindness and welcome for the railwaymen. As the chief officer of the society, I shall miss my great stay and the fatherly wisdom that helped to guide me aright in my more arduous tasks. Few imagine that our President, so simple in demeanour, was a man of great parts. He was a distinguished linguist, speaking ten languages fluently. He was an authority in learned circles on the Hebrew language, and on another, which he loved most of all, the Welsh, his mother tongue. He had been a missionary clergyman in South Africa, and while there underwent many hardships which only a strong constitution and earnest mind could endure. While there he zealously ministered to the spiritual wants of an English garrison. Once he received a message that a dying soldier, stationed at Durban, a garrison fifty miles distant, desired to see him. At once the Canon set out alone to walk the distance at night, through a wild country where wild beasts were known to wander. There was no road, except here and there a sheep track. All night and next day he laboured onward. At nightfall he espied a camp fire, which proved to be that of some soldiers of the Durban garrison. He inquired after the dying soldier, and, learning that he had unexpectedly recovered, he fell down exhausted and fainting. He had, in his anxiety for the soldier's spiritual welfare, overtaxed his powers. Can we wonder if his name is dear to thousands of soldiers as it is to railwaymen of the country? Among the miners in South Wales 'Our Canon' was much beloved. During the long strikes in the Principality he endeavoured to make peace between employers and employed. The rich, autocratic coalowner treated his kindly offers with disrespect and even insulted him, and the reverend gentleman found there were more gentlemen among the miners than could be found among the educated masters.

"Born in Merthyr Tydvil, of Welsh parents, the Canon was a true Welshman. He has died in the land he loved and of his birth at the age of 48, and his remains mingle with those of his countrymen in the pretty cemetery of the Aberdare mountains. His memory will be revered of his countrymen and by the railway servants of many a succeeding generation. His life was all too short, but yet long enough to leave behind for our example an instance of a man's duty to man well performed. One of our leading officers, on hearing of his death, wrote: 'We can ill spare so kind and true a friend. If goodness is rewarded hereafter, his will now be a happy state indeed.'"

Cordwell also wrote a long letter, in which he said: "Who among us can ever forget the days of anxiety and labour he passed through in Manchester, and when evening came round he would find his way

up to my house and endeavour to get at the opinion I held on the important matters affecting us."

In December, 1879, Evans wrote:—

"Those who visit Aberdare should not fail to seek admission to St. Elvan's Church to view the magnificent stained window erected in memory of the late President of the society. I inspected the window on Tuesday last and was pleased with its beauty, its artistic finish, and its general effect. It is an ornament to the church, and much admired by the inhabitants. The window is at the west end of the church, directly over the communion table, and, as is usual in such churches, the largest in size. The inscription is to the effect that the window is erected to the memory of the estimable Canon in his capacity as President of the society, and is gratifying to those members who regard the society with pride and affection."

So passed from among us a great soul. The first time the Canon appears in any records that I have searched is at Merthyr Tydvil in 1871, where he addressed a meeting.

Vincent, in the "Railway Review" of 1885, speaking of the Bristol General Meeting and the Canon, wrote:—

"The Conference commenced on January 12th and lasted nine days, being the longest time yet occupied by any similar meeting of the union. The Rev. Canon Jenkins, D.D., would have presided over the meeting had his health permitted, but it was plain to perceive during his opening address that he was labouring under great strain of mind and body. Those present will well remember his impressive words, so full of fraternal love, and the calm manner in which he spoke of his approaching end. 'My physicians tell me,' said he, 'that with great care I may live for two more years.' He died within two months of that time. I was appointed to preside over the Conference, and never in my life did I have such a lively time of it. Before me now is a bundle consisting of resolutions and amendments, riders, and counter-riders, and a continuation of them, to the number of nine on the motion, which clearly proved the earnestness of each representative to do justice to his constituents."

Vincent, however, does not tell us that delegate after delegate "folded their tents, like the Arabs, and silently stole away," till the last three days it was only an attenuated shadow of its former self.

We come now to the passing of Vincent himself. With all his egoism and capacity for mischief, he was a great soul. He was a capable speaker, and he could write well, and had a fair acquaintance with general literature. Let my readers look at the pleasing countenance in that portrait and he will see a face sunlit with benevolence and goodwill. Whitmore was right, when he said he was the greatest enemy to himself. In appraising his virtues, do not forget that to do as he did before the advent of the A.S.R.S. required not a little courage. Do not judge his work by the ease with which men can now speak and flout their membership. It is such men as he who made this possible.

Directly after the raid upon the old London Executive he broached the question of an Orphanage. The project was his; the first efforts to start it were his. His advocacy led the society to take it; and he never faltered in his love towards it, nor in his labour for it. It was his child, and he loved it dearly, and considered no sacrifice too great, no pains too many, if haply he could extend his influence. The present Orphanage is Vincent's enduring work, and when later another claimed the credit by a perverted history of it, Evans rent him, as he only could rend, and in honeyed phrases, more deadly than when steeping one's pen in gall, he left the historians account of it a limp rag of a thing. Trouble after trouble ensued with it. Our E.C. accepted Hague's version of the affair, and it could be seen that the railway people were doing their best to crush us out, and the end came. But before it did come Vincent had resigned his district (1876), not long after the delegate meeting at Bristol, and taken up the travelling agency for the Orphanage. He was neglecting his work, critics were gathering about him at Birmingham, and he glided out of the service of the A.S.R.S. as district secretary to this new opening. No one can say he neglected his work here. Whatever he did for the Orphanage he did with all his heart. Vincent was a religious man, and he would preach here and there on behalf of the Orphanage, and he organised committees all over the country to collect for it.

One of the most, if not the most, active in that respect was John Pilcher, of Battersea, a member of the Clapham Junction Branch. So Vincent preached, got others to preach, and brought grist to the mill. It was at the E.C. meeting when Evans suggested Macliver as President that he also reported the retention of certain books, among them two letter-copying books, and a diary by Vincent, which he had in vain tried to get from Vincent, and also a letter from him to the chairman of the Council was read in which Vincent urged that the books in question were of no use to the society, and he strongly desired to retain them in remembrance of the past. He was willing to have them examined by a Select Committee, or would be glad to be allowed to refer to them at any time. In another letter he wrote to the District Council he asked of what use the books were to them. The contents were his and they might be useful to him, and he begged of them not to deprive him of the correspondence, as he wished to keep a record of his work.

In the discussion at the E.C. every consideration was shown to the feelings of Mr. Vincent, but it was to be pointed out to him that the books in question were the property of the society, bought with the society's money, used by him as an officer of the society. It was also to be pointed out to him that he laid himself open to be proceeded against under Clause 12 of the Trade Union Act, and it was resolved unanimously: "That the General Secretary be directed to obtain the books and other property belonging to the society from Mr. C. B. Vincent, the late secretary of the Birmingham district, and, on receiving

the same, Mr. Vincent was to be paid the amount due to him from the society."

All along Evans took an impartial tone, and kept in abeyance the fact that he had a personal interest in the matter. He had previously reported to the E.C., which they knew, that at one time there was a danger, etc., but that that had passed away. There is a mystery about the proceedings and no clear record can be found. One of the living witnesses and a party to the transaction tells me that it was due to personal jealousies, and that Evans had a knack of making enemies by the strong expressions he sometimes used. I have a personal letter from Evans which refers to the matter, in which he makes charges against Hague and the other district secretaries, and in which he, Cordwell, Vincent, Graham, the Rev. E. Collett, and Phillips are mixed up.

The E.C. blamed Collett and advised him to keep clear of these society matters, in which he had lately been mixed, and Collett sought to justify himself in the "Gazette," and he makes the cryptic remark that "Someone had said that the other party was the greatest enemy he had in the world." Collett pleaded that he did what he did in the interests of the society, and the Editor, though giving him publicity, met him with banter, and said they had taken Evans under their wing when he was little known because they saw he was capable, and they were glad to find that the charges against him were not proved. They had heard that something was said about his (Evans) having received £50 from a person prominent in the railway world, and did not know if it was put forward as serious. It is possible he did receive it, and it may have been from Sir Edward Watkin for the assistance rendered in the Exeter election, but there is no evidence that he did receive it, but if he did it made no difference to Evans' attitude towards him when Watkin came in conflict with society ideals, because Evans hammered Watkin unmercifully when he brought in a limited Compensation Bill to stave off a larger and more effective Bill—in fact, Evans flung hard words at all who stood in the way of his aim, which just now was a real Compensation Bill, and he fell foul of Macdonald, one of the two Labour members. The letters referred to these dealings, Vincent being wishful for Evans not to see them, and he the reverse.

The correspondence went on for a long time, and Vincent kept pleading for the wages due to him, Evans offering to pay when the books were delivered. At a later E.C. Evans said much mischief had been done through their withholding Vincent's money. Vincent represented that he was badly used by the society, but he and his district had urged him to deliver up the books, letters, and other property of the society which he had received as District Secretary. Vincent then sent a mutilated book, but unfortunately he had not taken the precaution to cut out the index, which showed the nature of the letters and to whom sent. About 300 leaves were missing in all. Evans then wrote Vincent to the effect that when he (Vincent) complied with the first part of the

resolution to deliver up the books, he would comply with the latter part, and send him his money.

At the first meeting of the E.C. in 1878 Evans reported that the salary of Vincent had been paid. He thought he might say, as an impartial man in the matter, that if there had been faults at all they had been on both sides. Much blame had been thrown upon the Birmingham district, but that district had cause to complain. The facts brought out on Mr. Vincent leaving the district and the allegations made by the district remained unanswered. However, he believed Mr. Vincent had expressed regret, and that Birmingham's representative had accepted his explanation. Members of the society, in sympathising with Mr. Vincent having his money withheld, had felt very strongly against the district, but the District Committee had the greatest cause for complaint. At one time the feeling on their part against Mr. Vincent was one of indignation, caused by their inability to get him to a Committee meeting or to get from him a statement of the accounts and affairs of the district to enable them to settle up, and he believed that it was at his (Evans) intervention that the District Committee was prevented from taking legal steps to recover the property he held. While they sympathised with an individual, they should not be too severe upon others who were working hard and working gratuitously for the welfare of the society. He thought the meeting might now happily rest as regarded the salary. The Birmingham E.C. man said they had suffered from publicity, and that it was out of sympathy for Vincent that they had withheld information, and had not published half enough. He could only say that any officer of the society might go through the correspondence and he would see how much Vincent was to blame; that it was his own fault more than anyone else that he had not had his money before. The Committee desired him to come to Birmingham, where he had been employed, and give some explanation of his conduct during the latter part of the time. It would be carrying out the wishes of the branches. He said they did not understand the first part of the resolution which the Committee had passed, which was contingent upon the carrying out of the latter part—the delivery of the books. The first part had now been done, and it only remained for the latter part to be carried out, and to take steps for their recovery.

Among the letters cut out there were a number addressed to Mr. Bass, the Rev. E. Collett, Mr. Cordwell, Mr. Hague, and the Editor of the "Gazette," Mr. Phillips. The matter went for nearly two years, and in the meantime Vincent was paid his dues. In April, 1878, Evans reported as follows:—

"My repeated application to Mr. Vincent for the return of the property of the Birmingham district was answered by the announcement that it had been wilfully destroyed to prevent its being returned. If this is true, the property is irrecoverable. The society, through the E.C., has been treated in an improper manner by Mr. Vincent. As long as money was withheld he exhibited some respect, and indulged

in appeals to 'fatherly' and 'brotherly' sympathies of those constituting the E.C. Immediately he obtained the money, the honourable conduct of the E.C. and of the delegate meeting—that he should be paid by the district, even though he had not given up the property—is repaid by him in the act of disdainful defiance which I have recorded. It is now for the Committee to determine what further steps, if any, shall be taken."

If proof were needed of the improper character of these proceedings in which Mr. Vincent was a chief actor, it is found in his dread of disclosing the records of these proceedings, which were contained in the property alleged to have been destroyed. A letter was read from Vincent stating that in order to avoid further unpleasantness Mrs. Vincent had, in his absence, burnt the letters, etc., in question, and he hoped the dear old Canon's motto, "Let bygones be bygones," would be adopted. Vincent's act was strongly condemned. As to whether the property had been destroyed a doubt was expressed, and it was pointed out that wilful destruction was an indictable offence. Stratford and Camden proposed a resolution in condemnation of his action, which was carried. Birmingham moved, and Edgehill seconded: "That Mr. Vincent be expelled from the society, as he had tried to injure it and brought himself within the meaning of the rules." Edinburgh moved, and Twickenham seconded, an amendment: "That Mr. Vincent be fined 20s. for his past irregularity and refusal to give up the property of the society." Only the proposer and seconder voted for the amendment, and the resolution that he be expelled was carried by 7 votes to 2. Vincent thereupon wrote to the "Gazette":—

"SIR,—Doubtless many have been struck with the decision of the E.C. concerning my dear wife and myself, and expected to hear what I have to say. . . . My reply will be brief, and those who know me well, and especially those who know me not, I beg of all the favour of awaiting a further opportunity of justifying my conduct, of which thank God I am not ashamed. During my long and chequered career among railwaymen I have done not a little and all for the general good. The end has been expulsion! I am told, however, that I can appeal, and I am going to do so, not to my opponents exactly, for I think that would be useless, but to railwaymen generally. The time has arrived when the mass should be acquainted with the different actions of my life during the last 14 years of it. I have several times been advised to do so, but preferred being simply content to be satisfied with my labours. Recent events have altered that opinion, and I propose issuing in book form the varied phases I have gone through. But I wish first to ascertain if friends could aid me in publishing my autobiography, and I should like to await awhile the result of this suggestion. Were it not for my limited means I would not ask for this assistance. I have letters of interesting importance from the first, many of them of historical value. In the meantime, I most sincerely hope one and all will help me in the sphere I am engaged for the rest of my

days, and which I earnestly wish to be successful for the poor orphans' sake. I beg to thank the many friends for their letters of sympathy and subscribe myself to all,

“ Faithfully yours,

“ CHARLES B. VINCENT.”

This brought only one reply, and that from West Gorton, hoping that members would do nothing of the kind, as his conduct of destruction was inexcusable. The matter came up at the A.G.M. in 1878, and it was reported to that body as follows: “ Vincent resigned the district secretaryship of Birmingham in 1876. The District Committee complained of the difficulty of getting from him an account of the district management fund and the letters and copybook entrusted to him in his capacity as secretary. It was also complained that he was unwilling to attend committee meetings to settle the district affairs at the time of his resignation. Mr. Vincent had since asserted that he was never asked to attend. The E.C. had the matter before them in January, 1877. Before then he had supplied an account of the district fund to the committee. The account showed a large balance to be due to him for wages and expenses. No fault was alleged against the accuracy of the account rendered.

“ In March, 1877, two copy books and a diary were received at the General Office from Mr. Vincent. They were those which Mr. Vincent did not desire to retain. In July, 1877, Mr. Vincent again applied for his money. It was decided that the district should pay him, and if he still refused to give up the property, that legal proceedings should be taken for their recovery. The District Committee were dissatisfied with this, and did not pay the money as directed. The subject was briefly dealt with by the delegate meeting in October, which ordered immediate payment. This, however, was not done till the January, 1878, sitting of the E.C. Mr. Vincent attended at the G.O., and met Mr. Crowley by appointment, he being asked for the return of the property, and a promise was given by Mr. Vincent that the property should be returned subject to the consent of some gentleman unnamed. On the 2nd of March I wrote for the fulfilment of the promise, and on the 6th of March received the following:—

“ ‘ I have been so very busy that several letters, including yours, of the 2nd, have been obliged to stand over. I write to say that I am unable to comply with your request, having discovered that, in order to prevent any further unpleasantness, the papers have been committed to the flames by Mrs. Vincent whilst I was away from home. Of course, what is done cannot be undone, and I hope that our dear old Canon's observation will be accepted, and the future bring happier times.’

“ The matter was again considered by the E.C. in April. Mr. Vincent not having returned the property in so long a time, in disregard of repeated requests and the alleged destruction occurring *after* he had

received the money, led the E.C. to pass the resolution of expulsion. On September 13th, he wrote as follows :—

“ ‘ In reference to my expulsion from the society, I wish you to accept this as an appeal against that extraordinary action of the E.C.’ ”

At the delegate meeting Bedford moved: “ That the resolution of the E.C. expelling Mr. Vincent be rescinded, and that he be reinstated as a member of the society.” He did not blame the E.C. for what they had done; they were quite right, and showed due regard for the honour of the society, but they should consider what Mr. Vincent had done for the society and the benefit that had accrued to railwaymen from his efforts and the services he had rendered to them. Birkenhead opposed the resolution, doubting the accuracy of Mr. Vincent’s statements. Stourbridge also opposed, as did Leeds No. 1, who believed there was a good deal of feeling in the matter, and thought Mr. Vincent’s conduct disgraceful, but believed that instead of expelling him they should have prosecuted him, as they had promised to do. The Derby No. 1 delegate said he hoped to be able to go back and say that the expulsion had been removed. Stratford supported the action of the E.C., and disclaimed the statement that the decision was the result of feeling. Evans said the E.C. could not claim credit for not prosecuting, because he had been legally advised that it was not possible to take action, as too long a time had elapsed. He thought every leniency should be shown to Mr. Vincent, but, at the same time, the E.C. should not be degraded. It was possible to forgive Mr. Vincent his faults and at the same time agree that the E.C. were justified in their action. Mirfield suggested that on Vincent tendering an apology he should be reinstated. After Bow, Birmingham, and others had spoken on the subject, Mirfield moved :—

“ That this meeting considers that the E.C. were justified in expelling Mr. Vincent, but in consideration of the past service he has rendered, and on the appeal of Bedford on his behalf, this meeting reinstate Mr. Vincent, if he expresses his regret and makes a full apology.”

Camden and Birmingham proposed that the decision of the E.C. be upheld, which was carried, and the Bedford and Mirfield proposals lost.

Such, in brief, are the underlying causes of Mr. Vincent’s expulsion. That Vincent’s own version should be given, the following is appended from his last article on “ Railway Reformation,” which appeared in the “ Railway Review,” March 27th, 1885 :—

“ Before coming to a close I wish briefly to notice one more incident, and which here for the first time I have had an opportunity of mentioning, and it will help in what I desire to infer from it. As the society progressed, it was not altogether permitted to continue without friction. As has been seen, I more than once had to do with helping to put rough matters smooth, and during 1876, from what came under my notice, it became evident that something serious was taking place,



J. CLIMPSON, the First Treasurer, 1872—1873, with Dog "HELP."

for I received a letter from the representative of the 'Gazette' to say Mr. Bass was desirous of ascertaining particulars as to the conduct of certain individuals holding prominent positions, and in order to arrive at the truth, Mr. Bass wished for a few of the leading district secretaries to meet in London, and investigate the matters in question, for, unless he felt sure all was clear and straightforward, he would no longer be attached to the society, but, once and for all, sever his connection with it. The meeting took place, previous to which I proceeded to the chief office, and begged of our chief official to be present, but he declined. There was, therefore, no alternative but to proceed without him, and I was requested to conduct the investigation without the least partiality, and I did it in all conscience to the best of my ability. Documents came into my possession which, upon ascertaining the opinion of counsel, proved a libel in the cases of two persons, and scandal in reference to the third. I placed the whole of these before our much-respected patron, whose purse was ever ready to help, and in this proceeding he paid every expense. He was much indisposed, and very deaf at the time I gave my report, so deaf, indeed, that he could understand nothing I said without speaking loudly close to his ear. I was closeted with him at his London residence for a long time into the night whilst the various members of the Council (for it was during the Council week) were dispersed at different places of relaxation after their official duties, and I was delighted with the result of our interview. His injunction was that the information I possessed in the various letters should be sealed, and that at the Council, members thereof be informed that the parties in future were to mind their own business and not to interfere in other people's; and one or two became very wrathful because the packet of information was not to be exposed, and which, after all, was not without a precedent. However, influence was brought to bear upon the one who had, with all his many faults, been a true friend of the cause he worked hard to raise, and in the end he was made to be no longer a member of it, and a member it is not likely he ever will be again. But, be that as it may, he never had but one desire, a desire that has never been swerved from since he first crossed the threshold of the service so many, many years ago.

"Some folks have been vain enough to say they are so clever that were they to leave their immediate occupation their loss would be irreparable; but that is nonsense, as many a one having such a thick head has been made to see. The man comes with the times, and 'Time tries all.' Members have seen the hard battles that have been fought and won, led and fed, in the case of the Amalgamated, during its first years, by one who for generations to come will be remembered. That Mr. Bass was a true friend has been proved over and over again in this history. More than once the society tottered, weakened by the very ones that should have strengthened it, and he came forward and set it on its legs again. By him and through him it went on from stage to stage, until it became solid and sound in the intellect and stability of its government; for as the first of these qualities developed, so it was seen

that nothing short of real unsophisticated conduct would do to maintain its dignity in the honourable roll of Trade Union progression, and of which it now ranks among the first and greatest. With its advancement so the different improvements advanced conducive to the comfort and well-being of an appreciative public, who in encouraging the society were benefiting themselves at the same time."

Still later he wrote a little booklet of sixty-six pages. The date is 1902, and the price was 3d., and was entitled "An Authentic History of Railway Trade Unionism." On page 64 is this:—

"On March 12th, 1876, Mr. Graham—who seemed to me to be the watchman over the interests of the society in London—wrote a letter (I have it) of the greatest importance concerning an intrigue in the Metropolis of the most dangerous character, and on the 21st, Mr. Phillips, Editor of the 'Railway Service Gazette,' wrote me saying Mr. Bass would like me to go to London, as the society was in imminent danger. As early as possible an extraordinary meeting was called. It met at Spencers Hotel, King's Cross, on March 25th. Those present were: Mr. Cordwell (Manchester), Mr. Hague (Nottingham), Mr. Graham (London), Mr. Phillips, his assistant, and myself. Mr. Evans was connected with what had been stated. I saw him and pressed him to come to the meeting, but he declined. The result of the interview was that I should try and get to the bottom of the alleged intrigue, and I did, and the issue was libel and scandal, in which Messrs. Evans, Phillips, and Langley were mixed. This inquiry cost Mr. Bass a large sum in obtaining counsel's opinion. So annoyed was Mr. Bass that I had the greatest difficulty in preventing his withdrawal from the society. I was to inform each of the three to mind his own business, and the letters, etc., which I had I was to make a sealed packet of them and keep it. I did as he told me. I now come to a point of some concern to myself, and I mention it to clear away any impression that may have been entertained in the minds of some, similar in the mind of a member at Liverpool two or three years ago, when I was in that city. I was asked to speak at No. 1 Branch, and did, but only had a few minutes. When I sat down the member got up—I think the gentleman's name is McLaren—in a manner not kindly, so it seemed to me. He wanted to know, he said, why I was turned out of the society. My reply was 'For saving it.'

"The above narration is part of it. The other part is this: In that sealed packet were a few sheets of the copying letter book, which belonged to the society when I was District Secretary. In making inquiries, I indiscreetly copied the letters on them. When I became Travelling Agent to the Orphanage I returned to Mr. Evans every scrap of paper except these few tissues, which, in response to the request of Mr. Bass, were not to be revealed. Mr. Evans demanded them. I could not break faith, and so I was expelled the society for retaining that small part of the property. When presiding over the E.C. on one occasion I had given offence to Mr. Evans, which he never forgot."

We all have our faults; he had his, and I felt sorry for him when I heard he had lost his position. As a matter of fact, the "few tissues" covered 300 pages of the copying books, and one can see from the two sides that Mr. Vincent had a knack of concealing the truth when it told against him, and exaggerating it when it told in his favour. A letter from John Graham, written to me in 1910, is very caustic about that history, which he terms a glorification of Vincent himself. Vincent remained Travelling Secretary of the Orphanage till he was dismissed, as seen in another chapter. In the declining years of the old warrior's life he was in want, and Sheffield tried to smooth his declining years.

He was an erratic and vacillating genius. He was always going to do great things, but they failed to come to the birth. At one time he gave out his intention to write a novel, and more than once he announced that he would write the autobiography of his eventful life, with its ups and down, his able work for Trade Unionism, but that also never matured. Later still he was going to write the history of the Derby Orphanage, and had obtained the consent of some of the Royal Family to dedicate it to them, and for their portraits to appear. It was never issued. He acted as secretary for the draymen of Sheffield, but soon fell from that estate. Then he wrote a long article in the "Railway Review" referring to the work he had undertaken for the miners, and had qualified himself for the work by going down a mine. And at each new venture the "Railway Review" kept repeating "Mr. Vincent's New Occupation." Then he became Secretary for the Railway Clerks' Association, and the experience of his work in that society would be interesting, but I am afraid, from the stray references on record, that they would not be creditable to Vincent. Still, with all his faults, he was a great soul, and his worst enemy was himself. One by one every party that stood for him dropped him.

There have been so many apocryphal stories of Langley, that truth should have a chance in a statement of fact. He was a man of extraordinary versatility. Fervent, eloquent. In every reform movement he was an active agent, and there is no question that he was heart and soul with the working classes. He was the first triumphant vindicator of free speech. This was at Hyde Park, at that time when the railings went down, and he was one among the crowd who did the damage. In innumerable ways he sought to lift workmen from the bondage of ignorance and degrading conditions of toil. Among the many things he took part in was that of the "Artisans' Dwelling Company," which was formed by a number of influential persons to erect dwellings for artisans. It was formed in 1866, and Swindlehurst and Lowe were the original signatories to the formation of the company. Swindlehurst was appointed manager and secretary. The capital was originally £150,000, afterwards being increased to £250,000. Lowe was the principal person dealing with finance, Langley was chairman, and Saffery was estate agent.

In June, 1877, an investigation was made into the affairs of the company by Evelyn Ashley, T. Brassey, S. Morley—two of our Vice-Presidents—and Mr. Morris, the result of which was a prosecution. Saffrey came into connection with it in 1871 whilst negotiations were going on for the purchase of the Shaftesbury Estate, Battersea. Saffery bought this estate for £25,000, and sold it to the company for £28,000. The Queen's Park Estate, Harrow Road, was offered for auction, and one lot only was sold. After the auction Saffery called on the auctioneers and ascertained the others were withdrawn, not reaching the reserve, and the unsold lots would not be sold for less than £35,000, but they would be willing to sell three of them for £22,000. The company discussed the desirability of purchasing these, and agreed to do so if they could be obtained at not more than £800 an acre. Saffery acquired the one first sold for £14,000, bought three other lots for £25,000, and sold all of them to the company for £45,312. It was conveyed to them, Saffery making a profit of £9,312. At the end of December, 1875, the Cann Hall Estate, Leyton, was in the market. It was about 60 acres. It was purchased, and again Saffery made a profit of £13,000 on the deal. The Queen's Park Estate was independently surveyed and appraised as being worth £1,000 an acre, whilst the company had agreed up to £800. The Cann Hall Estate was valued at £850, and Saffery accepted £800. The directors received a guinea for each sitting. The cheques were drawn without concealment, and all, from appearance sake, seemed in order. All the witnesses as to the value of the property agreed that the prices paid were reasonable. If Saffery had made the deal by himself, for himself, there could have been no question of illegality, and he had that right. The charge was conspiracy and fraud. This would be the form of the conspiracy. Saffery was to buy, and they were to purchase, but any that they obtained from the company over and above the sum Saffery purchased for, to be divided between them. An illustration will make it plain. When the property was purchased on which Unity House stands it was found that the agent had made a good bargain. The deal was his and his alone. But let us suppose that he and the Trustees had said: "Now this property is worth so much; any above that you can get from your society we will divide." That is what happened here. There was a good deal of evidence from a woman, who received from Langley several presents of money, some of which she drew out again by cheque and handed to him. Twice Langley gave her £1,000 as a present, but later he called and said he was in debt, and she paid £800 into his account. The notes were exchanged by her at the Bank of England. Before any question of trial 561 persons had presented the directors with a memorial of thanks as tenants on the estates. Many persons were called as to excellency of character. One curious incident came out. One who had been a director received an envelope at his address with £650 in banknotes, with a simple note, "A present from a friend." He took it to his bank, put it on deposit, and told his banker the circumstances, and but for this he might himself have been among those charged with

conspiracy. Willis, afterwards Judge, and Besley defended Langley. Avery was for Swindlehurst. The Government prosecuted. The Attorney-General asked for a verdict on conspiracy only so as to allow a civil action with regard to the money.

The verdict was given overnight. Langley asked for a mitigation of sentence on medical ground, and in a tremulous voice appealed to the mind, heart, and intellect of the learned judge. He was so astounded at the verdict that he felt himself unequal to the task at the time, nor was he better prepared having passed a night of wretchedness at Newgate, but it was absolutely necessary that he should say a few words. He called attention to the offence as a moral one. It was the first case of its kind that had been before the Law Courts, and he had reasonable grounds for believing that he did nothing illegal. When first offered him he was distinctly told that it was not the money of the company, and if he did not receive it, it would go into Saffery's pocket. Saffery did not offer him money, nor did he have any communication with him. His opinion, and it was shared by a large number of persons who knew him as a public man in the country, was that there had been in this matter a sort of one-sided justice. They had heard of a gentleman, Spence. He had some of the money, but he was not in the dock. There was Mr. Longcroft's solicitor, who had £1,000 and used it in his business; he was allowed to explain. He pleaded for mitigation, as he would have done when the verdict was recorded, which would have had this advantage, that when the learned judge went on his knees at the throne of grace to ask mercy, he might—as he hoped to obtain mercy—he might have been inclined to extend it toward those who were before him that day. He had lived a life of intellectual activity, consequently whatever the prison authorities might do prison life would be a living death, deprived, as he would be, of the vital intellectual life which had been to him as the air he breathed. It had been held—and the prosecution would concur with him—that the object of punishment was not revenge, but that it might act as a deterrent. A light punishment would have that effect. It would bring misery and ruin to him, crushing him down to the lowest possible disgrace. He asked his lordship for mitigation, so that he might die with those surroundings which every good man liked to have around him, and with his children's faces looking on his dying bed. Commissioner Kerr swept aside this plea, also that of Swindlehurst, and sentenced Langley and Swindlehurst to eighteen months' hard labour each, and Saffrey to twelve months.

In Chapter 21, under the heading of "A further calendar of friends whose fate needs explanation," George Jacob Holyoake in his "Sixty Years of the Life of an Agitator," says this:—

"Mr. J. B. Langley was a publicist with whom I was associated for more than thirty years. He had the passion of public service, and, like all who have it, neglected his own interests to advance it. He was imprisoned for the violation of an Act never put in force before, and which, if honestly put into operation, would imprison hundreds of persons in the City of London who are counted of good commercial fame, and

who would share the same fate. Mr. John Bright and Samuel Morley contributed to a fund to enable Mr. Langley to go to the coast for a time when free, he having many friends who knew how a forlorn hope or a struggling cause could command his services, day or night, near or far. Indeed, it had been better for him had he given time to his own business and less to the public cause. Mr. Langley was one of the minor poets, as well as a ready public speaker. Mr. Swindlehurst, a very hard worker for social improvement, was imprisoned in like manner from a like cause."

The tribute to Langley is splendid and well deserved, but I utterly discount Holyoake's view in the moral aspect. Every close observer of life knows full well that morality and legality are not twin brothers, and that law and justice do not always go hand in hand; but everyone can see that this transaction of Langley's was utterly immoral. The moral man needs not the operation of the law to put him right and keep him right. It is written in his heart and conscience, and if the law gave a thousand sanctions to a deed that was wrong it would still be a crime. Morality is above and beyond all law; the inflexible passion for honesty takes no account of it and has no need for it. Do not, however, let this moral lapse detract from his worth, work, and service for us. The present writer having followed his career in pursuit of this record, pronounces him as mountains high above and beyond any worker of that time. His hard work made yet other workers. He counselled, inspired, cheered the despondent, instructed ignorant, wrote out their resolutions, saw what wanted doing for the A.S.R.S., and did it, gave it fervour, fire, eloquence, put it on its feet, and kept it there. As he flits across the reformer's page he seems to be ubiquitous. I see him defending a workmen's institution that had more idealism in it than business capacity. At the time when Orsini attempted the assassination of the Emperor of the French in Paris, and when the danger of assassination was both real and assumed, fear, aiding assumption, affecting the nerves of statesmen, he was whole-heartedly at work for the political refugees.

London in 1858 was in danger of becoming the home of repressive efforts, and Lord Palmerston, the personification of expediency, brought in, under an affliction of nerves, a Conspiracy Bill, which would have laid even Dr. Bernard, of France, by the heels, or delivered him to his would-be tormenters. This Bill was carried in the House of Commons on its First Reading by a majority of 200. He was one of the many advanced Radicals of London who took decisive measures to bring its iniquity and danger into public view. So prompt and effective were the means taken that public opinion was aroused to a remarkable degree, because there was not a little in its honour to political refugees, especially in the City of London, which had been the home of freedom from the time of the immoral reformer Wilkes. The only crime of the refugees was that of resistance to a despotic Government or teachers of liberty like Mazzini. London was placarded so

effectively that hoardings and shop windows were crowded with advertisements against the sinister designs of the reactionaries, of which Palmerston was the outward expression and vehicle. The greatest difficulty the reformers had was in calling off a meeting they had arranged for in Hyde Park. In the meantime, notwithstanding the majority of 200 on the First Reading, it was turned into a defeat of ten on the Second Reading, but, in spite of calling off the meeting, 200,000 gathered, and what was meant to be a protest became a song of triumph. Langley's office at that time was at 3, Falcon Court, and was one of the places from which reform efforts emerged. The very next day we find him addressing the electors at Deptford, the main theme of his speech being Ireland, which lacked nothing in plain speaking, incisive vigour, and actual historical facts, and was very eloquent. He was the friend of Ireland, when it had but few in this country. This is but a sentence or two taken from his speech to the electors of Deptford, when he stood for the Parliamentary Division of Greenwich, February, 1868, referring to Ireland: "Would to heaven we could lay our hands upon our hearts and say of the Government of England 'Thou canst not say I did it.' We cannot do this. Our policy has been one of extermination, a swindle in finance, a breaking in legislation, a mockery of religion, a cruelty without parallel. We have pacified Ireland by trampling her underfoot till she has bled at every pore." In the records of our history the circumstances of his passing from among us are painful indeed. The prison doors close upon him, he is chased out of light into darkness, and we see him no more.

Chapter XII.

DE PROFUNDIS.

THE hours movement started by the society at Cardiff began in 1881 in a more active form, and G. Boon was appointed clerk to fill the post vacated by Graham. Evans, Harford, Duffin, and Boon were engaged in it, and it was agreed to inaugurate the movement by a striking demonstration at Exeter Hall, the forum of many discussions, and where Evans had uttered his most eloquent speeches. A London committee was formed, and the meeting was fixed for Wednesday, May 18th, 1881. Never before had such a meeting of railwaymen been held. The traffic in the Strand was held up, and the procession was witnessed by thousands of interested spectators. Passmore Edwards was chairman. He was the proprietor of the "Weekly Times," which afterwards became the "Weekly Times and Echo," the "Weekly Echo," failing, amalgamating with it. He was also proprietor of the "Echo," a bright little halfpenny evening paper, the only one issued in London at that rate, and was, moreover, a great philanthropist, and one who has enriched many libraries with thousands of books. On the platform as supporters were many Members of Parliament and members of the London School Board, among whom were: Miss Helen Taylor, Miss Henrietta Muller, Mrs. Fenwick Miller, and Joseph Arch. The meeting was not only for shortening week-day hours, but payment for Sunday work. The hall was packed and all the speeches were good. There are few speeches uttered forty years ago, stripped of the local circumstances and the warmth of utterance, which rouse or inspire one, but these are notable exceptions. Evans excelled himself, his speech being unmistakably the great one of his life. It fills over four columns of the printed pages of a newspaper. It is even now instinctive with life and fervour.

He dealt with the sporadic strikes that had taken place, indiscreet as they were, but showed why men had struck. He presented damning facts of long hours, not one day or two, but covering forty days, more or less, and grade after grade was marshalled in his red array of facts, and also the physical effects. Arguments, facts, banter, and rich humour studded that speech. Mr. Underdown, the general manager of the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway, had written on behalf of his directors. One man complained that he had worked one week 112 hours, but was paid overtime after he had worked eighty. The reply was that "The hours of labour are regulated, as my directors believe,

with a due regard to the safety of the public and the comfort of the men." Evans asked: "Now was this directors' statement true, and was this overtime put on for 'the comfort of the men'?" Then he turned his searchlight to the North Staffordshire, where the men had said the strain put upon their physical energies was too great to endure.

Evans' reference to the G.W. commenced: "Then on the Great Western Sir Daniel Gooch, the great economist—(loud and prolonged groaning)—I see that Sir Daniel Gooch is very popular among you—(laughter and renewed groans)." Then followed instances of this company, and he next directed attention to the North-Eastern, the Great Eastern, and the others. This was his peroration: "Before I sit down let me warn the companies, the shareholders, and the public that having put our hands to the plough we will not turn back. (Cheering continued for some time.) The movement shall go on, and if a struggle is forced upon us we will engage in it, believing we are on the right side. (Loud cheers.) Whatever betide we are determined that the nine hours shall be ours, and that railway servants shall enjoy in common with the rest of the community the blessings of rest and the opportunities of fulfilling their social obligations, of self-improvement, and the high duties and obligations they owe their families."

Nothing like it had ever happened in our history as this meeting. They seem, in this far-off day, to be inspired, every one of them. Theodore Fry, however, confined his speech mostly to Sunday work—less of it, but more pay for it when unavoidable. "If they worked a steam engine seven days the brasses would wear out one-seventh more than if they worked it only six. Beyond this temporal fact they had the infinitely greater one, that the Great Father and Creator of all after finishing this wonderful work of creation, 'rested on the seventh day and hallowed it.' There was a wonderful sentence with which Mr. Gladstone—(loud and prolonged cheering)—concluded his speech on the Irish Land Bill. It runs thus: 'Walking by the divine light of justice we cannot err.'"

After forty years few of those who were present are living to-day. One of the few is Samuel Lazenby, who since 1892 has been Treasurer to the society, having been a branch secretary under five General Secretaries, and who knows more of the personalities of those who have been under the wing of the A.S.R.S. than most men, and whose treasures I have tapped for the purposes of this history. This was in the forefront of an hours Sunday movement—and it failed. Mass meetings were held all over the country. Some were well attended, but recruits came not. Its speakers might have said, perhaps did say, "We have piped unto you and you have not danced; we have mourned unto you and you have not lamented." Then the Movement Committee thought they would invite the non-unionists to contribute a day's pay, and made it so enticing—that if a certain sum was not reached they would return their money. Many did so contribute, but, like the auctioneer's bids, they did not reach the reserve. Workers, however, worked on.

Evans wrote some of the most brilliant of his articles in the "Railway Review," which even now seem to leap into life as the page is looked upon. But still the movement hung fire; nay, worse, a rapid process of declension which had set in in 1880, from the moment of the increased contribution, went on and on. It was enough to make angels weep. Down and down went its membership in 1881, and still more in 1882, when published records at the end of the year showed only 6,321, but it was well known within that this did not reveal the full declension. For heartening purposes the highest figures of members that could be kept were kept and not erased from the books, as they ought to have been. Manifestos, signed by Evans as President and Harford as Secretary of the movement, were issued, putting the physical, financial, and religious aspect of the movement prominently before railwaymen. The daily and weekly Press boomed it, showed its desirability in safety for the public, no less than physical necessity for railwaymen; showing also how the hours of railwaymen were much longer than those of the mechanic or artisan; that these had been going steadily down for many years, but railwaymen's hours instead of decreasing went up and up, till they became a positive public danger. The one exception to the chorus of condemnation of long hours was the "London Figaro," which, after a clumsy argument about the manifesto issued, lampooned the effort and maligned the intent thus: "Never mind about the increased danger to the personal safety of the travelling public, or about the increased mortality of the railway servants, or about the social duties and home life, or about the duties devolving 'on citizens of a country blessed with free and democratic institutions,' or about the loss of the rest and privileges of our English Sunday—*provided there is extra pay*. What the Committee call extra work is wicked without extra pay, but with extra pay it is righteous." This paper had always a spicy and original phrasing, sometimes without regard to truth, and failed to defend itself on a charge of slander and criminal libel against George Odger. It was run by a man named Mortimer, who dearly loved the capitalist.

No phase of life that had its bearing upon the long hours worked was neglected by Evans, and the financial aspect of it was put by him only to make long hours expensive—the only aspect that would appeal to the railway companies and the shareholders. He put forward the religious aspect, laden with scriptural quotations, that would have done credit to a minister of religion. Before the public gaze he showed the denied rights of citizenship as a result of long hours. He carried into the home sentences like these, after showing the demoralisation of the physical and intellectual vigour of the men: "Have you ever seen a railwayman after a long day's work enter the house and throw down his cap and his basket with a growl of dissatisfaction? He sits at the table, on which his wife has carefully prepared for him a nice meal. He finds fault with it and her. His children are a nuisance, their prattle angers him, the little ones are hushed or turned away in disappointment. He goes to bed till he is aroused by

his wife to again go on duty. With burning eyes he gets up, hastily dresses, swallows the meal prepared for him, and in ill-humour quits the hearth, to the relief of the wife and all. The house is not a home, the wife is not a sweetheart."

Then he showed what the home should be with wife and children with a father whose life was not all work, but proportioned between duty, religious observances, citizenship fulfilled, and home virtues in full sway. Nor did he repeat himself. There was freshness always. New aspects of old truths were put in new and striking forms, sometimes lit up with humour, then a strain of pathos, then a burst of indignation against a system that permitted the evils that ranked to high heaven, and called both for redress and vengeance. Nor was there any lack of appeal to those who stood outside, and those on the fringe who had given a day's pay to the cause. Whilst thanking them for the minor effort, he asked them to take up the larger duty of membership, showing that freedom came by self-sacrifice and effort and adhesion one with another, and said what the great English poet had said to the Greeks: "He who would be free, himself must strike the blow."

The Movement Committee on August 26th, 1881, presented this very tame memorial to all the railway companies:—

"306, City Road, London, E.C.,

"August 26th, 1881.

"To the Chairman and Directors of the Railway.

"Gentlemen,—Representative meetings of railway servants, including in many instances the public also, have been held in Exeter Hall, and, among many other places, at Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Salford, Liverpool, Wolverhampton, Exeter, Cardiff, Leicester, Newport (Mon.), Abergavenny, Darlington, Hull, etc. At these meetings, at which your employés have been represented, a unanimous opinion was expressed that the time had arrived when your board, in common with all other railway companies, might reasonably be memorialised for a readjustment of working hours, and of the manner of calculating payment for the working time of your servants, so as to bring both into conformity with the customs prevailing in all other industries, which customs are recognised by your board in your existing arrangements with the artisans, factory workmen, and other employés in the service of your company.

"The following programme relating to the subject, adopted, in the first instance, by a representative Congress of railway servants, held at Cardiff in October, 1880, has been approved by those attending the meetings referred to, and by many thousands of workmen employed in the departments associated with the actual working of railways. It briefly expresses the readjustments which your company's servants (with others) believe

themselves justified in asking you to bring into operation. The programme is briefly as follows :—

“ 1. That the *ordinary* duty for all grades, excepting signalmen and shunters, be limited to nine working hours consecutively engaged in, excepting intervals required for meals. That time worked in excess of nine hours each day be paid for as overtime at an increased rate. Mileage rates for enginemen, where in practice, to be calculated at an equivalent basis.

“ 2. That in the case of signalmen and shunters eight consecutive hours shall constitute an *ordinary* day's work.

“ 3. That *Sunday* labour shall be reduced to the lowest dimensions compatible with the necessities of the public. That all *Sunday* labour be paid for as extra or additional labour, and at a higher rate than the ordinary week-day labour.

“ 4. That goods yards be closed against the reception of ordinary traffic at 1-30 p.m. on Saturdays.

“ On behalf of the meetings named we respectfully submit these alterations in the conditions of railway service to your kindly consideration. We are directed to express the belief entertained by many practical men and proved by the experience of manufacturing and other trades that shorter hours of labour may be brought into operation without any material loss to the shareholders; that, in fact, the practice of greater economy in time would lead to a greater amount of work being done in less time and with more regularity and expedition in the business of railways.

“ Railway servants are convinced that a reduction in their hours of labour is essential to their physical welfare, and for their social and moral improvement, as well as to the well-being and happiness of those at home, to whom they owe obligations. Accompanying this is a copy of a circular which may more fully explain the justification of railway servants for the request now put forward by them.

“ We are, gentlemen, your obedient servants,

“ FRED W. EVANS, President.

“ EDWARD HARFORD, } Joint Secretaries of the Railway
“ G. BOON, } Servants' Nine Hours Movement.”

Just at this time, unfortunately, Evans suffered from an attack of gout, which lasted for several weeks, and as he was the soul of the hours movement, it hung fire a bit, and, to add to the misfortune, Duffin fell ill whilst at Swansea. The “Times” poured ridicule upon the memorial, and charged the memorialists with statements never made, among which was : “ According to the memorialists, the railway boards are guilty of some of the worst offences masters can commit against those in their employment. They overwork them, underpay them, they exact toll out of season.” Such a mild memorial might have saved even

criticism, except to specify its moderation and criticise them for that; but to charge them with what they had not said, but ought to have said, was hardly fair of the "Thunderer." Evans replied to these attacks at a conference held during the Congress week at Manchester, at which there were delegates from many other places than those represented at the Congress.

He said: "The 'Times' and a few other journals had argued that the aim of the movement was mainly to increase wages by obtaining enhanced payment for all time worked beyond nine hours for Sunday labour, but to this they demurred. This demand itself contained the only practical means of restricting the practice of overworking men. By what other influence constantly operating could the hours of labour be kept within reasonable limits? Parliamentary interference with adult labour would be an innovation which workmen more than any others would object to." This was the position of Radical workmen, and some of these old-time leaders steadfastly maintained that doctrine right to the end of their lives. That conference amended the programme, stiffening and extending it.

The Congress had a heavy agenda, with its usual contradictory resolutions on one theme. According to them one of the Travelling Secretaries should reside at Manchester, another at Sunderland or Newcastle, or, again, visit towns where the society was weak, hold meetings, and canvass. Another was voting lists, and enumeration of those who voted for and against. That names and addresses of secretaries be printed and supplied to branches. Edinburgh sent the following resolution: "That this meeting expresses its strong disapproval of the arbitrary action of the E.C. in purchasing, without the sanction of its members, the publication known as the 'Railway Review,' with a view to publication under their own control, and considers such action exceeding the powers conferred on them by rule, and also introduces a precedent by which the rights of members may be subverted and the funds of the society seriously imperilled." Bradford and Low Moor had a similar one, which was also backed by the same words; also by Rawtenstall, with the addition: "also the manner in which the Editor treats correspondence sent to him." Cardiff had one of the same calibre: "Without first consulting the members, so that their sanction might be obtained." Low Moor had another, which was to be a vote of censure on the General Secretary for carrying out the decision of the E.C. authorising him to purchase it, knowing it to be contrary to Rule 19, and a breach of faith to the last A.G.M. in not supplying to the "Gazette" official news. And there were others both absurd and impossible to carry out.

Amendments had been sent to rules which could not be carried out because they had not complied with the rules both as to time and method. Among them was a triennial meeting instead of annual; another, biennial. A proposal was put forward that the E.C. consist of nine members elected from the London branches, and another for direct election out of thirteen mapped out districts. Another proposal

was put forward that no action be taken by the E.C. which involved an expenditure of more than £20. The Secretary's report was a lengthy one, and dealt with all phases of the Employers' Liability Act. He said that beyond doubt the Act had borne good fruit in the direction most desired. It had led to more precautions being taken for the greater safety of workmen; also that the companies had instituted a system of contracting-out by insurance, and coercion for evasion was in vogue. The E.C. had a short Bill prepared by Mr. Ilbert to render void such contracts, which was backed by Morley and Macliver. The Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress had introduced one similar to their own, so they concentrated their strength. It was read a second time, but as a private Bill, was crowded out. The character system, railway accidents, inspection, the brakes question, and the hours movement were among other things before them. At the conclusion of his report Evans said: "Over eight years have passed since the society's general meeting was held in Manchester. Then we assembled under a desponding cloud. Disunion, distrust, and doubt existed all round. Members were holding back in the belief that the society would decay and collapse, and that the Amalgamated Society after a short-lived career would be numbered among the dead combinations which once existed for railwaymen.

"A new resolve came from that meeting. Delegates returned to their branches confident of the society's future. They applied themselves in restoring the waning faith of others, and in spreading abroad the spirit that animated themselves. Renewed vitality was soon felt. The union rapidly grew in strength and in power for good, and in the time which has since elapsed it has performed noble work for its members and the railway servants generally. Let but the same earnestness be emulated by the friends who are here to-day and the second meeting in Manchester shall form a new departure in the society's history, which, now strong in wealth, shall become strengthened in numbers, and with the confidence of thousands reposed in it again lead the van in carrying railway reforms, in protecting labour in giving independence to labourers and in elevating railwaymen to that pinnacle in the social scale to which their moral worth and responsible duties entitle them."

A question of the admittance of members and the public to the gallery of the hall was considered and agreed to by twenty-one to seventeen. Evans said the time ought now to have arrived when the men ought not to be afraid to proclaim themselves members of the society. Those who were least fearful and most willing that their names should go forth to the society had always been the most secure. They should all bear in mind that the officers of our railways were men and gentlemen, and that if there was one thing the latter prized above another in a man it was straightforwardness.

It took eight years before his plea had effect, so timid were they, but his homily, indeed, his many homilies, were all for the cultivation of manhood and self-assertion. In season and out of season

he urged it, sometimes with pleading, at others with vitriolic scorn, but they refused to listen to the charmer, charmed he never so wisely.

Edinburgh moved his resolution, saying his branch was of opinion that the purchase of the "Review" left them without a free Press, and that it would have been better to have left it in independent hands. Cardiff, who had been elected chairman in the absence of Macliver, left the chair to move his resolution, asking of the E.C.'s deeds "Where will they land the funds of the society?" Ardwick: "Who is the Editor of the 'Railway Review?'" The General Secretary: "The General Secretary." (Roars of laughter.) Darlington was in favour, and moved the approval of the E.C.'s deed, and said that unless they had an organ of their own they could not have publication of essential matters. Accrington said the deed was done, and asked them to make the best of it. Evans asked if when they paid £56 for advertisements in the "Gazette" for the Manchester district it had strained its powers more than in this case. Edinburgh spoke of a free Press, and asked if they had that in the "Gazette." Should they trust the advocacy of their interests to strangers rather than to those in whom they confided? And to take a wider view of the case, either the journal must control the society or the society control the journal. Evans said he was glad that no allegations had been made against him on that occasion. If anyone felt them let him state them. He had not realised one sixpence out of the transfer of the paper. The members never had such free publicity as at present; and more strictures upon himself had appeared since it had become the property of the society than had ever appeared in the "Gazette" and the "Review" together. Mexboro' moved approval, and it was carried; they set aside £1,000 for the hours movement; also that one Travelling Secretary reside at Sunderland or Newcastle for six weeks. The vacancy caused by the resignation of John Graham was filled by G. Boon and Albert Pilcher—still in the employ of the society, and its oldest paid servant—at the same sum for both of them—£130, allowed by rule.

The Voluntary Sick Fund numbered only 145 members. Cordwell, who was active for the comfort of that gathering, died on October 17th of brain fever and erysipelas, and the "Railway Review" of October 21st said of him in a memorial column: "His zeal for unionism was very great, and it is not too much to say that for many years of his life his whole heart and soul were entirely devoted to furthering what he, in common with ourselves, believed to be the best interests of those in the railway service. It is possible that after generations may see the society served by abler men than those who originally gave it form and maintained it through the trials of its infancy; but it will never be served with greater fidelity and zeal than by the earlier officers, of whom the subject of this notice was one of the most prominent." Local railwaymen erected a monumental tomb over his grave in the Ardwick cemetery. After the districts were abolished he held the office of Travelling Secretary for two years. During that period he broke a small blood vessel, and he

found the inconvenience of travelling and different kinds of living too much for him. He resigned at Leeds and was given a testimonial of £50.

This is an extract from the minute book of the Edinburgh Branch of September 9th, 1877, in the handwriting of William Bell: "Our chairman then called upon Mr. Cordwell to give his address anent his journey through Scotland, which was given in a most grandiloquent manner. Mr. Cordwell said there were rocks ahead, and requested us to be watchful and energetic towards the welfare of our society, inferring that the Scotch Society meant to oppose us in the east. Mr. Cordwell dealt at great length upon the advantages of our society to railwaymen. Throughout the whole address Mr. Cordwell was attentively listened to by a crowded house. Bro. W. Campbell then rose to move a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Cordwell, accompanied by a few most respectful remarks, passing a high eulogium on Mr. Cordwell. It was then seconded by Bros. Thomas Hootan."

As previously said, his district was the most businesslike. Everywhere reference to his eloquence was made. But at the same time, his geese were always swans; his exaggeration was almost boundless, and he often passed off mental inventions for facts. When in the very early years the "Gazette" was trying to show, owing to lack of finance, that there were not 10,000 members, the same and following issues gave him as saying the membership was 40,000. He was apt to be depressed at non-success, and took artificial efforts for exhilaration. With all his faults he was one of the best, and as showing how a prophet has not honour in his own district, the photos of him could not command a ready sale. We sometimes use workers and then neglect them while living, and soon forget them when dead.

In the next month Macdonald, the first Labour Member to be elected to Parliament for Stafford, died. He was charged by Evans with arrogance, but whatever he had of that was lost sight of in his sterling honesty and strong attachment to his early principles. He was a Chartist when Chartism existed, and remained a Radical. At the Exeter Hall meeting he called murder murder, whether committed by a railway company or anyone else.

The hours movement went on, and meetings were held in all the great towns. Eminent public men boomed it; members of the A.S.R.S. worked hard for it. Evans made eloquent speeches in its favour, wrote brilliant articles on its behalf, but it was an engine that would not steam, and there was no go in the movement. The eloquent periods of that time fell upon the audiences' ears like the tinkling of a cymbal, and so far from bringing members, they kept receding from the society. Love's labour was lost, effort useless, money was spent in vain. Railwaymen seemed in a death sleep. The movement was dead and only needed burying. Disheartened as they were, the workers worked on, but more and more it dawned upon them that the end had come; and Evans felt keenly the failure. Consider it. By

his Herculean labours the Employers' Liability Bill became an Act. He was flushed with success, and his members had praised and rewarded him with a testimonial. He then set out to conquer in new fields, but was beset with indifference and cowardice. He put the society into a sound financial position, or in that condition that would make for solvency. He laboured unwearily for the society he loved with a passion, and now he felt that the castle of his imaginations, which he tried to rear still higher by effort, was crumbling before him, and from evidence everywhere about him was going to ruins; membership was descending with gathering momentum.

He said: "I have laboured in vain and spent my strength for nought." It seemed like the crack of doom, and his impetuous nature sought inspiration in other forms, which still further increased his depression. The Associated had fixed itself, and all the heartening sentences that he had uttered had vanished into thin air. The potentialities of the society were not grasped by those for whom it was formed. The vigour went out of his speeches, which only occasionally showed some of the old gleams. He said to them: "If you who are members do your duty loyally by the principles you profess, locally advocate the advantages of membership and the value of self-help, and hold steadfastly by the standard of unity, the union will yet attain to a great strength and to a proportionately greater work on behalf of the railway service."

The "Review" had on its front page a leader which belied facts, but was meant to be heartening. At the bottom was an indication contrary to its tenour, that the period of collecting the day's pay was postponed from March 1st to May 1st. The leader heading was: "The Turn of the Tide." It opened: "If the world is blessed, or otherwise, with one class more than any other it is with those prophets who are always foretelling evil and failure and never see their prophecies fulfilled. The adoption of the radical changes which were necessary to bring the A.S.R.S. into a solvent and satisfactory position was seized upon by the prophets in the railway service as signs portending the society's dissolution. After reviewing the events of the year and gauging the strength of the union for the first and second halves of that period, we rejoice to think that the leaders are enabled to mark progress. The natural disappointment of men whose sole object in belonging to the society was a Superannuation Benefit tenfold in excess of their payments has ceased to be heard of. Those who found in the changes a text for disparaging sermons and malicious inferences have worn it threadbare, and have done the utmost their ill-will could devise. Even the cynical persuasion of officials, who in their hearts detest the influence of the society, has lost its charm and power. The society had well withstood every adverse influence in a trying crisis, and its faithful members are to be congratulated that the outlook is now brighter. The society is gradually and surely increasing its strength."

It was the old saw of the boy in the wood whistling to keep up his courage, because facts were altogether against it, and those inside

knew, as history now shows. There is a marked difference between honest opinion and lying; and this was lying, bald and bare. The hand was Evans' without doubt, and it corresponded with the period of the E.C. meeting, which he said gave eighty branches showing decreases during the last half-year. Having discussed the means of promoting greater strength, the report suggested that the Executive might consider means of creating greater confidence in the association, encouraging local effort and diffusing greater knowledge on the benefits and objects of the union. But in another part of the report dealing with the hours movement it was declared to be in a state of suspense. The E.C. instructed Evans to prepare a circular urging local effort, and suggested forty branches where meetings ought to be held, and offered to defray expenses from the General Fund; and they mapped out places to which the Travelling Secretaries should go.

The E.C. issued the following circular, which was produced by Graham's electric pen:—

“AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF RAILWAY SERVANTS OF ENGLAND, IRELAND, SCOTLAND, AND WALES.

“Head Offices: 306, City Road, London, E.C.,

“February, 1882.

“ON EXTENDING OUR SOCIETY.

“Mr. F. Whitehouse.

“DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,—As the Executive Committee, we ask your earnest attention to the subject referred to in this communication.

“The present is a time of anxiety to every earnest member who wishes well to the society and one which calls for special exertion on the part of loyal officers and members in propagating the principles which bind us together in union and in extending the society by inducing non-members to join our ranks.

“The necessary changes in the society's constitution resolved on at Cardiff in 1880, and which came in force in January, 1881, did constitute a crisis in the society's history, through which it has successfully struggled in the year now gone. The crisis has left us weaker in numbers, though richer financially, while the constitution secured by the alterations has given the union a foundation on which a powerful, lasting, and solvent society can be built up by your help and that of other earnest workers.

“Taking advantage of this crisis, some officials who regard with disfavour the power workmen obtain by union, and who dread the society's ability to expose abuses and injustices, have used their utmost influence to injure the society in the estimation of our fellow workmen, for whose welfare, as well as our own, it is maintained.

“We regret to say that some of our fellow railwaymen have been ready instruments of this adverse official influence and have spread misrepresentation about our union in the hope that they would thus win favour for themselves. There has also been the adverse influence of late members who left our ranks because they were no longer to be

entitled to a benefit they did not pay for, and which they could only enjoy by depriving their fellow members of every prospect of benefit. Again, a few enginemen, who prefer class prejudice to true unity and brotherhood, have sought to split the service into sectional societies, to set class against class, and thus unbidden do the work of the enemies of combination among workmen.

“It is to counteract these unfortunate influences that special exertions on behalf of the society and of combination are now demanded from yourself and fellow members.

“Each individual officer and member can do much, by yourself and others advocating among non-members the advantages of membership, the good work the society has done and is still doing, the many cases of emergency and distress the funds provide against, the usefulness of combination, the protection it affords men, and by demonstrating the goodwill and sympathy the intercourse at our meetings creates, many thousands will be convinced of their duty to join with us in the manifold obligations we have undertaken.

“No influence is so great or so sure of good results in increasing our numbers as that exercised by members themselves when they work discreetly and persistently in extending the benefits of thrift and protection to those outside our pale.

“Hence it is we ask you at this favourable juncture to do your utmost yourself, and persuade others to do likewise, in extending the society in your locality. Local effort is the mainstay of the association, and by it our numbers can be doubled this year.

“Opportunities sometimes occur when a branch by means of an active member or members can rouse up a good feeling towards the society at a neighbouring station and succeed in forming a new branch, or at meetings of some section of the Servants bring members into union. We have resolved to encourage branches to take action in such cases by undertaking to pay the cost of the railway fares of the delegates of any branch deputed to advocate the claims of the society, as well as the cost of the necessary printing, from the General Management Fund. The only condition asked is that the intention to take action shall be submitted to the General Office, from whence every encouragement will be given.

“We have also decided upon holding about 40 well-organised meetings in various centres throughout the kingdom, at each of which a general officer will be present. In the organisation of these meetings we rely chiefly on the active co-operation of members in each locality, and invite the branches to select willing officers and members to take part by speaking on the occasions.

“A list of the centres selected will be published and the cost of the meetings be made a charge on the General Management Fund.

“Another way each branch can aid is by special local meetings or open branch meetings, conducted by the officers and active members, to which non-members have beforehand been invited in a friendly manner either by bills or by word of mouth.

"There is one point which you can with advantage impress on your branch members. It is their duty of regularly attending the branch meetings and taking their part in the business to be done. Their attendance encourages the officers, stimulates one the other, and enables all members to know what is going on in their own society. It is also desirable to make the meetings social and interesting. A little forethought will enable this being done.

"A decided improvement in trade and in dividends tells us that better times for the sons of industry are at hand. Railwaymen, like others, ought to share in the advantages of prosperous times, and they can do so if they will unite together and insist on it. The Amalgamated Society is the only practical union existing for railwaymen, and it opens its doors wide enough for all who have goodwill to their fellow workers and wish to see their order prosper.

"As fellow members and fellow railwaymen, I ask you to join us in a persevering effort to spread wider the society's benefits, so that a larger number may share with us the advantages we possess by being provident and united.

"We are, dear sir and brother,

"Yours faithfully,

George Compton	Bow (Chairman)
Fred. & Thos. Whitehouse	Miles. Plating
William Henry Trinder	Newcastle
George Craig	Edinburgh
Thomas Newman	Swindon
J. Watkin	Darlington
Geo. Watson	Preston
Geo. Langlands	Gateshead
A. Hornsby.	Twickenham
W. Palethorpe	Leeds
J. H. Stantial	Bristol

The Executive Committee

Fred W. Evans
General Secy.

The following reproduction of two pages of minutes reveals the poverty of the society as they were the only records that were not printed:—

Executive Committee Meeting

May 4th 1888 and three following days.

Present Representatives from Leeds, Normanton, Hunslet, Eccles, Edge Hill, Willersden, Clapham Junction, Nine Elms, Accrington, Preston, Bow, and Hyde Plating and the General Secretary.

The Edge Hill committeeman was voted to the chair. The minutes of the former meeting were confirmed.

The following is a resume of the business transacted on the discussion of the report presented by the General Secretary, which was first formally received.

Branch Affairs

1489
That the Cradley branch be dealt with in accordance with Rule 6, Clause 3, and Rule 8, Clause 14.

That the General Secretary apprise the Secretaries of the branches that have not complied with the rules that if such compliance is not made within one month, a travelling secretary will be sent, for the purpose of pushing the rules into operation.

1491
That as the Secretary of the Middlesborough branch has been in subordinate to the rules 1489 to 1534.

2/ of the Society, he be at once removed from office, as per Rule 3, Clause 4.

1492
That the request of the Lancashire and Yorkshire goods guards for permission to form a separate branch at Sandhills be acceded to, in the event of there being a sufficient number desirous of joining it to comply with rule and forward the required requisition.

1493
That the general secretary take immediate steps for the recovery of £14-8-4, being funds of the Society held by G. Clarke, the late secretary of the Middlesboro' Branch, instituting legal proceedings for the purpose if necessary.

1494
That this committee appreciate the efforts of the new secretary towards clearing up the affairs of the Birmingham No. 3 branch and that the late secretary be requested to make good the deficit in his accounts of £8-8-10½ within one month.

1495
That the Officers of the Wolverhampton No. 2 branch be instructed to take the necessary steps for the recovery of the defalcation of the late branch secretary.

In April the "Review" headed its leader: "The First Stage," which might have been written "The Last Stage," with stricter truth. The whistling boy was still in the wood; later it was admitted 80 per cent. of the contributors of the day's pay were members. In this period there are no speeches of Evans. His sure, swift literary strokes in the "Review" are absent, and for the first time he is absent from the E.C., and Harford does his work. They passed three resolutions on the hours movement: (1) "That the Executive Committee approve the recommendation of the Central Committee to close the hours movement, and to return the day's pay to those who have subscribed to it." It was done, and the present writer received his. (2) "That inasmuch as the amount subscribed towards the nine hours' movement is inadequate for its further prosecution as a national movement for the present, the E.C. impresses upon the branches the necessity of increased effort towards strengthening the society's organisation in the hope that at no distant date it may be in a position to take up the movement with a better prospect of success." (3) "That in the event of any local committee of the nine hours' movement dissolving, the E.C. recommend that the Central Committee should respectfully ask them to contribute any balance of the 1d. per week collected or any portion of such balance towards defraying the costs already incurred for which the society has hitherto been responsible."

They also placed on record their deep abhorrence of the foul and abominable crimes committed in Dublin by the assassination of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke, and hoped the perpetrators of the foul deed might speedily be brought to justice. The E.C. meeting was held in the week ending May 13th, 1882. Macliver, the President, received this from Evans:—

"306, City Road, E.C.

"27th May, 1882.

"Dear Sir,—I beg to formally notify the society, through you, my intention to resign the office of General Secretary at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting to be held at Darlington on October 3rd next and following days. It will be necessary that you and the Executive should make certain arrangements for the nomination of candidates and for the election of one thereof to fill the vacancy caused by my retirement. On these matters I will see you, with other officers of the society, on any date you may fix after your return to London. I am anxious that on leaving my office everything shall be in a condition likely to make easy and clear the earlier duties of my successor, whoever he may be. The reasons for this course now taken will be stated at a later day. But notwithstanding my retirement from official duty, my desire for the prosperity of the union, which I have done so much to foster and maintain, remains unchanged. If not a paid worker, I yet trust to continue a voluntary labourer in the cause of reform and of progress among railway servants.

"I am, dear sir, yours faithfully,

"FRED W. EVANS, *General Secretary.*

"P. S. Macliver, Esq., M.P., President, A.S.R.S."

Macliver replied as follows:—

“ Ardnare, Weston-super-Mare,

“ May 31st, 1882.

“ Dear Mr. Evans,—I have received with much regret your letter of resignation, and this feeling I feel assured every member of the society will share with me. It is impossible to estimate the extent of the obligation which the society owes you. When the E.C. holds its next meeting I will endeavour to attend and to assist in making such arrangements as may be necessary in the future direction of the society. I am greatly relieved to find that you will continue to act as General Secretary until the Annual Meeting in October next.

“ Yours faithfully,

“ P. STEWART MACLIVER.

“ F. W. Evans, Esq.”

All manner of rumours went about as to Evans' intentions, one that he received the offer of an appointment from Sir Edward Watkin, and another that emanated from Huddersfield that he intended to stand for Parliament. The Watkin rumour may have originated in the fact that when he was dismissed the G.W. Sir Edward offered him an appointment on the South-Eastern, but as it was coupled with a condition that he retired from the union he would not so much as consider it.

At the meeting of the E.C. beginning July 19th he gave as his reasons for resigning: (1) The failure of the hours' movement (of which he was the originator and leader) after pledges of support from many thousands of members and non-members, but who, when tested, declined their support and had placed him before the service and the public in a false position. He regarded the men's defection as a personal defeat and as an indication of want of confidence in him personally. (2) The want of progress had, after exertions exceeding those put forward by any trade society, led to the conviction that railwaymen were not prepared in any large numbers to support a genuine and solvent Trade Union, maintained chiefly to promote their interests and assert the rights of their labour. The latter, he conceived, was the primary object in founding the society and the one justification for continuing it. The non-success as a Trade Union had disheartened him in his labours. (3) Foreseeing that the reduction in members (which implies a corresponding reduction in the amount allowed for management) must necessitate a reduction in general management expenses, which can only be effected by a rearrangement and reduction in the official staff employed, he placed his own position as chief officer at the disposal of the society. He thus redeemed a pledge given some time since to other officers to the effect that when the time came for him to recommend retrenchment in the cost of official staff he would accompany it with his own resignation as the highest-paid officer.

An E.C. member moved: “ That the explanation given for the General Secretary's retirement be accepted, but that he be asked to

reconsider his resignation." An amendment was moved: "That as the reasons given by him were stated to be final, and had been submitted to the branches, the Committee could not do other than accept it." The amendment received four votes to nine, and the original motion ten votes to three.

On the Sunday Evans reminded them that it was necessary for them to make arrangements for the election of a General Secretary. After a discussion, it was resolved: "That it is the earnest wish of the E.C. that our General Secretary will continue to act as the chief officer and adviser of the society, and that no election for the office will be required." This was carried unanimously, and he intimated the withdrawal of his resignation. That same E.C. recommended to the A.G.M. that they dispense with one of the Travelling Secretaries, and should there be any change in the General Secretaryship that the salary be £200 for the first year and increased £10 per year till £250 was reached. There were reports of closed branches. The "Review" showed a loss. They decided to publish a short history of Trade Unionism, if it could be obtained, and "Trant on Trade Unionism" duly appeared.

In the meantime the society had arranged for an exhibition of improved wagon coupling appliances at Darlington, and Tom Watson, the secretary of the Darlington Branch, did most of the work in connection with it; in fact, he suggested it. The "Review" of August 25th, 1882, contained an open letter from Evans in leader type covering a page, in which something of the old vigour was manifest, and the closing words were: "Why will not railwaymen attain to a position commanding the respect of the companies, which is within their easy reach? They had but to agree to unite, to make the smallest regular sacrifice, and a common bond gives them a giant strength. Indifference, selfishness, and jealousy are the hindrances to greater union. Not one of these qualities can assist you in life, though each of them, directly or indirectly, injures you and retards your progress. Try to put them one and all aside, and be truer men to yourselves and one another. Workmen have ever found unity the one way to advancement, and through centuries it has been their armour and their sword. It has freed them from serfdom, raised them to be citizens and freemen, helped them in their struggles against unequal and oppressive laws, emancipated them from social inequalities, and assured for them political power, despite the most strenuous opposition of the opulent of the land. It is to unity you, my fellow railwaymen, must look if you would be of those who run in the race of progress and are bent on winning respect and a full return for their wealth-producing labour. The A.S.R.S. opens a way for a general union of railway workers, and always invites you within its fold."

These letters continued for some weeks, and the railwaymen of Bristol had a conference, or family gathering, with their old chief, friend, and fellow worker, at which he spoke, and there seemed to be something of the old vigour about him again at this period. In

all the articles and speeches he was inviting them to put their manhood to the test and turn it to practical service for themselves. He carried this into his very lengthy report to the Darlington A.G.M., closing with these words: "I should dread to take part in open strife, but the manner in which every memorial asking for reasonable hours are dealt with by officers and directors and the undisguised determination to insist on excessive hours, even at the risk of safety, at the sacrifice of the men's health and of their moral and social well-being, reluctantly forces on us the conviction that no concessions will be made till men unitedly refuse to work the long hours insisted on and are prepared to meet the insistence of directors with resistance. When our fellow workmen have moral strength to assert their right to reasonable hours the companies will be more ready to meet them with concession than they have hitherto been. The Protection Fund is designed with that conviction. Whenever the railwaymen in greater numbers unite in the society they will be in a position to assert their right to that for which they now beg, and beg and pray for in vain."

The sum and substance of all his letters and speeches was that it was lack of courage and of manhood that had brought them to the impasse in which they were; that they "must shake their chains to earth like dew," and never would obtain anything, not even a union, unless they did. Dealing with the financial outlook he showed that there was no encouragement that way; that the slipping away of funds had its root cause in the other things he had outlined. Gloomy enough that was.

The receipts for the year amounted to £8,553 14s. 2d., and the gross expenditure to £10,069 14s. 3d., or £1,516 0s. 1d. more than income; nor was that confined to the current year of 1882, because 1881 showed expenditure above income if it had not been for gifts and interest on investment. Having passed the troublous infant period and emerged from strife, this looked at squarely was the blackest period in the history of the society, and the E.C. minutes of 1881 are in manuscript only and were not printed. Little wonder, then, that Evans for a short period, which will come again, lost all vim and threw up his hands in despair. Judging it by its finances alone, the only true token of membership, the union had sunk to nearly 5,000 members. They took drastic action. They dismissed Duffin and Boon, made provision that in the event of a new General Secretary the commencing salary should be £200, with yearly increments of £10 till £250 was reached, and in other ways readjusted their clothing power. They, however, saw that making payments to orphans for only those whose parent had met with accidental death was anomalous. The one who had died by accident might have left only one child; another might leave six, having died a natural death, and leave less behind him as the result of his larger family than the one who had left but one child. So they took courage and used it to remedy the inequality, and threw it open to all, trusting to local efforts to raise the necessary funds.

The Darlington Coupling Exhibition had been a great success, not financially, but as a spectacular display. Tom Watson threw himself into the project with vigour and business ability, and they presented him with a gold ring and pin. He afterwards became an officer of the society.

In January, 1883, the Caledonian railwaymen struck. The cause of the strike was justifiable, if causes alone were considered; but do men reason, can men reason clearly and logically when, as in this case, the employers would not listen to them, and so drove them to open rebellion. If the choice is to be between the sacrifice of manhood and failure, better fail than make the sacrifice. To strike and fail to achieve the object for which the striking took place is to make the employers more amenable to reason in future disputes. A dispute that fails to-day may prevent another to-morrow, because reason has had to take the place of strength, because strikes, whichever side wins, make both losers financially, but finance does not cover all life. Their programme was, in the main, ours. There are times in life when it is better to cast every thing into the urn than to submit to galling conditions. The Scotsmen did this. At this stage of railway life it was the only thing they could do, because reason never had an innings on the company's side.

The abandonment of the hours movement officially did not mean abandonment everywhere. The Taff Vale men, above all, kept it up, the company at that time paying 10 per cent., with 7 per cent. bonus, say, 17 per cent. interest.

One might have thought that with the return of Evans' old vigour as was evidenced by his activities in the last few months of 1882, that the watchman's inquiry, "What of the night?" would have received the response "The morning cometh." However, it came not, and affairs went from bad to worse. Evans was in the throes of despair, and he descended with the descending union—perhaps because of it. Branch after branch in busy railway places had fallen away. Tyne Dock had closed, three branches at Salford were made into one, and Stratford all but fell to pieces. Dairycotes, Alfreton, Lancaster, Ormskirk, and Blackpool were among the slain. Peterboro' and a host of others were in trouble.

Kentish Town and Camden circularised branches contrary to rule about the dismissal of Boon. Evans was not in attendance. It was said that he had left the country for Gibraltar for the benefit of his health, whilst others said he was seen at Brighton during the period of his absence from the General Office between the A.G.M. and the next E.C. meeting. The E.C. of 1883 met at 306, City Road, on February 7th, 1883, and they had to hunt up Evans. A Sub-Committee was appointed for that purpose, and having found him, reported the cause of his absence as arising from mental exhaustion occasioned chiefly by overwork, a very charitable finding; and they conferred together to consider the best means of preventing a repetition of his absence, and the Sub-Committee recommended that Evans should attend at the General Office

in accordance with Rule 4, clause 7, unless prevented by illness, and in the event of absence he should advise the clerk of the cause. Graham, who had been engaged as sub-editor of the "Review," found his business too pressing to continue it, and W. Bowles was engaged at the same salary—30s. per week.

The Committee of that time were : J. Abbott, who was Chairman, T. Watson (Darlington), J. Appleton, R. E. Bell, W. Foreman, W. H. Trinder, W. Hoyes, J. Pilcher, G. Watson (Preston), J. Lace and S. Arnold. It is believed that every one of that Committee is now dead. Harford piloted the Committee through. The Committee withdrew the protection afforded to the Taff Vale men because they had broken the terms upon which it was granted. It was the midnight of our history, and, as the title of our chapter states, it went into the depths. Evans had disappeared, and though a month's leave of absence had been granted him he overstayed his leave. The E.C. met again in May. The Finance Committee's report was first read. They reported as follows :—

"To the Executive Committee.

"Gentlemen,—We beg to report that in the interval from your last meeting we have met six times to transact business. At the first of these meetings we were informed by the General Secretary that a month's leave of absence had been granted him, upon which he was then engaged. The accounts were gone through and cheques made out to cover the month's accounts. During the time allowed the General Secretary for his holiday no cheques were drawn, but after the month's leave had expired, owing to his continued absence, we were compelled to make arrangements with the bank manager to draw money to meet the just claims of the society. A resolution, which you will find in our minute book, was passed to meet the case. We think it right to mention that we have not seen Mr. Evans since February 18th. We wish to call your attention to the large sum of money (over £6,000) lying at the bank, and beg to recommend that the greater part of the same be invested. The initial arrangements for the Orphan Fund prize drawing have been made and the books of tickets will be ready for issue this week. In reference to the General Secretary's absence from duty, we deemed it necessary to write to the President of the society, at the same time intimating to him that as the E.C. would meet on May 2nd, 1883, we did not consider it necessary to call you together specially to consider the matter. A copy of the letter will be found in the letter book. We further call your attention to the amount of salary received by Mr. Evans for the quarter being £55. We wish also to bring before your notice the manner in which Mr. Harford has conducted the business of the society during the long absence of the General Secretary and to the extra amount of labour imposed on him, and recommend for your consideration some recompense for his labours. The accounts and all other matters

concerning this Committee have been brought before us in the most satisfactory manner. A book containing a record of our proceedings will be laid before you.

“(Signed) WILLIAM ROBINS, } Members of the
FRED HORNSBY, } Finance Committee.”
THOMAS WATSON, }

The E.C. passed the following resolutions :—

“That as the General Secretary has not returned to duty since his month’s leave of absence expired on March 14th, 1883, nor sent any explanation of his absence, the Committee considers he has vacated his position, and therefore appoints Mr. Harford to act in his place until another Secretary is duly elected. That a copy of the foregoing be sent in a registered letter to Mr. Evans’ private address.”

“That a circular be issued to the branches advising them of the decision of this Committee in reference to the General Secretary, and requesting nominations of candidates for the office, the same to be addressed to the President and sent to the General Office not later than June 12th. After that date voting papers shall be issued to the members, the same to be returned to the General Office not later than July, addressed to the E.C.”

“That the President be requested, on receiving the nominations for the office of General Secretary, to take such steps as he may think necessary to ascertain that the candidates are duly qualified, as prescribed by the rules, and that the names of the unqualified candidates be not placed on the voting papers.”

“That the action of the Finance Committee in authorising the Assistant Secretary to countersign cheques in the absence of the General Secretary be approved and acted on in future.”

“That in the event of any claim being made against the society by Mr. Evans it shall be referred to this Committee for consideration.”

A gratuity of £10 was voted Mr. Harford. The following resolution will account for the declension of Stratford :—

“That the secretaries of the Bow and King’s Cross Branches be deputed to make a special audit of the Stratford Branch books, and that their members be suspended from benefit until the branch comply with rule in respect of dues and balance sheet.”

Carter, the secretary of the branch, had committed defalcations, and the branch, which had been the premier one for years, with the one exception of Battersea, who took the lead, sank from 500 to 50. The Kentish Town Branch, having disclaimed any joint action with Camden as to Boon, the resolution of censure with regard to it was withdrawn. A large number of branches were closed.

This deserves being put in : “That steps be taken for the recovery of the electric pen battery, by legal proceedings if necessary.”

This Committee of May, 1883, overhauled everything, rescinded minutes when their working was against good government, arranged caretaking, tenders for printing, an audit of the "Review," appointed G. Compton, of Bow, as Auditor in place of Bowles, who was made Sub-Editor of the "Review," registered the paper in the name of the society, had Elgood, the solicitor, present to get grip of the legal proceedings, and altogether did its work well. The "Review," after the absence of Evans' hand, survived only by the loyalty of the members—certainly not on its merit. It was the dullest and most uninteresting from that period till Maddison lifted it in 1889 out of its non-interesting depths and lack of skill to an organ worthy the name. True, William Foreman did lift it a little, but only a little.

Evans, then, has gone; it only remains to sing his requiem as General Secretary. He never uttered disparaging words of the A.S.R.S., though he had abundant opportunities. As we shall see in a later page, he started a paper called "The Train" and edited it, and became later the Editor of the "Liberal Labour Journal." He composed speeches for Parliamentary aspirants who had more money than brains, did hack journalistic work, wrote the articles that appeared in the "Sun" traducing the I.L.P., and especially Keir Hardie, when that paper was owned by Horatio Bottomley, which paper was founded by T. P. O'Connor after he was deposed from the "Star," at the instance of Colman, of mustard fame, in favour of his son-in-law, Professor Stuart.

In 1894 the members decided to give Evans yet another chance and elected him, with Keel, of Middlesbrough, to audit the society's accounts. But, alas! he never fulfilled that function. We shall have occasion again to refer to him—during the working of the next national movement, and after the Taff Vale decision—but so far as the union was concerned his work was done. It has been said that genius is akin to madness. Evans was a genius, and he was sometimes mad. He came into our movement—he was not in its first stages—in time of trouble, and he went out in the time of trouble. He lacked patience, and could he but have had that virtue, the root of so many others—because patience makes mind and heart at leisure with itself, gives its possessor the full use of every faculty, gives vision, heart, soul, and a real self, puts talent to the best uses, for the highest worth—he had done better. He was of a mercurial temperament, unduly fond of controversy; everyone was a friend or an incarnate fiend. Movements if progressing were reaching up to heaven; if not, they were rushing hellward. He was prudent, but had the audacity of faith. He asked no permission to utter a sentiment that he thought wanted uttering. To him it was the only thing that could be done. He was a bundle of contradictions, and men hated or loved him strongly.

But with all the swaying forces arrayed against him, when he took the helm he conquered them one by one. He imparted stability, killed the warring factions that were, and raised and laid with

equal skill others. He imparted sound judgment to its rulers, worked with a brain and steered with consummate skill, and the ship emerged from rocks and shoals into the open sea. Had he but had stability of character and self-control, which is wisdom's root, he might have given to the nation a greater service than he rendered to railwaymen. He had the weakness of his strength. It was his genius that saved him again and again. Those in authority knowing his true worth considered it best to tax his virtues and overlook his faults; and they were right, even though they clouded and sometimes hindered the full exercise of the gifts that were his. He could see at a glance through the heart of a difficulty more than any man I knew at the time. His speech was clear and resonant, forcible, telling; it carried conviction into every sentence. His crisp written sentences were cameos of art. The idea was there without a redundant word, and was "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever." He could divine character with a swift, sure touch, knew when the time was for action and when his strength was to sit still. He would have done it in 1882, but his moral fibre was weakened. He was great, courageous, and far-seeing. Workers were few, and he was a Talleyrand and Machiavelli in one. He used weakness at times and made strength of it; and where strength was but not sound judgment, he wasted it in the way.

When he was piloting that great achievement of his—the Employers' Liability Bill—he knew his friends and placed reliance on them, and concentrated his attention, as far as he could, on his enemies or likely enemies. Radical as he was, he supported Sir Edward Watkin at Exeter because he pledged himself to a Compensation Bill, and a pledge from him he knew was a great deal, because, after Hudson, he was given the title of "The Railway King." Watkin, unsuccessful at Exeter, afterwards stood for Hythe, and Evans went and interviewed him in his bedroom and got his assent to vote for the Bill. If he was elected Evans knew it would be putting the cat among the pigeons by Watkin voting for the Bill. He made direct and flanking movements as best suited his cause. His was a swift, active brain; he could see the path he had to traverse and the difficulties in the way, and he met them one by one. He wasted the strength of Chapman's enemies by supporting Chapman, throwing him over when he had wasted effort.

In those days of trouble he laid an unerring finger on every blot, mirrored needed reforms, knew even when they had fulfilled their function and must give place to new—as with the districts. His ideas of reform held the field against all comers; and when the call came to him he followed the gleam. He had power to inform the mind, to invest imagination with facts, set effort on fire; knew the personalities who would be the vehicle of reform. He pierced with swift insight to the heart of a difficulty, could bring order out of chaos, unity out of division. He had a magnetic personality, and could clothe his ideas in winning, convincing speech. It won men over to him sometimes whilst listening to him, and afterwards went their way doubting. He could

force evil upon another evil force, and when destruction had spent its force would come along with the single eye and go over the crest laughing at his foes. He had the vision of the seer and a wealth of prophetic language, and in his early days must have had an intimate acquaintance with Scripture.

Had he but retained his moral ballast he had done more; his life would have been bright with many a gleam, and his achievements many. There was scant regard for the authority of an E.C. who in search would find him with a fuzzled brain declaiming to a barmaid. We may say our worst of him; we can never say the best. To impart courage and conviction to cowards you have to be with them; and that cannot be, he could not be, and so he could not keep them to his heights. The writer's last conversation with him was on a railway journey, when he speculated on our having a brilliant leader, and he confessed that he could not see him in the distance. Wait!



Geo. Chapman.



F. W. Evans.



E. Harford.



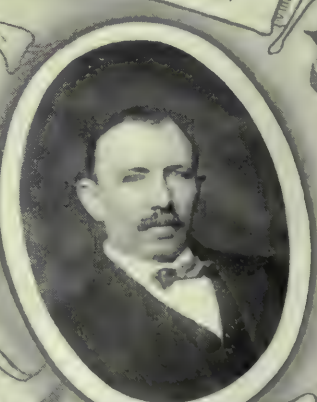
Richard Bell.



J. E. Williams.



C. T. Cramp.



J. H. Thomas.

GEN^L SECRETARIES

Chapter XIII.

THE COMPARATIVELY QUIET YEARS.

THE General Secretaryship was vacant, and nominations were asked for, such to be in by June 12th, 1883. On that date only two had been received, one from Edward Harford and the other from G. Boon, Camden. Three days after the appointed time one was received from Leeds No. 1 Branch, nominating Mr. J. Flintham, of that branch, which, even if it had been in time, was not seconded; and as Camden had been precluded by Rule 6, clause 10, from taking any part in the society's business, Harford was the only candidate. The President wrote Harford on June 14th:—

“Dear Sir,—I have seen the nomination papers forwarded from the branches and find you are the only qualified candidate for the vacant office of Secretary. The rules are not sufficiently definite upon the subject of electing a General Secretary, and I would suggest to the E.C. that any appointment they may make should be conditional upon the approval of the Annual Meeting in October.

“Yours very faithfully,

“P. STEWART MACLIVER.”

If the other two had been qualified, the election of Harford would not have been open to doubt. He was the only possible candidate at that time. The E.C. meeting on July 11th, 1883, passed the following resolution: “That by virtue of Rule 3, clause 4, giving this Committee the superintendence and management of the society, after having examined the nominations for the General Secretaryship, we find that Mr. Edward Harford, of the King's Cross Branch, is the only person legally nominated, and therefore declare him duly elected to the office of General Secretary.” Mr. T. Watson, of Stockton, was elected to fill the office of Assistant or Travelling Secretary vacated by Mr. Harford for the higher post. He entered upon his duties July 30th, 1883, and removed to London. Before me is his application for the post in both shorthand and longhand.

From this period the society's membership began to mount up steadily, so that Harford was able to inform the A.G.M. at Edinburgh, 1883, that the leakage had stopped, and about 2,000 new members had accrued. He further reported that, though no movement of any stirring description had taken place, they had been putting their house in order to prepare for that time, when they should with united voice press for shorter hours and increased remuneration for labour.

He concluded: "This quiet and systematic operation has not been without its effect, as seen in the addition to our ranks. . . . I firmly believe that it is not necessary that our members should always be kept in a state of effervescence to induce railwaymen to join a society which holds out such advantages as ours. . . . At all events, our society has a great future before it. It is the one Trade Union of the railway servants, and is pledged to uphold the rights of workmen."

At that Congress Robert Whitmore, Battersea, after years of comparative quiet, again came on the scene. Another was R. Collingwood, of Tyne Dock, who comes up later, with loss of prestige, through his action before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, after the next Scottish Railway strike. This A.G.M. is the tameest on record. Mr. W. Bell, of Edinburgh Branch, was its Chairman. The only notable thing was a proposal to dispose of the "Railway Review," which somehow would not be disposed of. It refused to be sold or killed.

For the years up to 1889 our narrative must be in the nature of a diary giving the narrower and unimportant events covering these years. In 1882 the North-Eastern men started a movement, and the N. E. officials refused to recognise the Committee as a *bona fide* representation of the men. They therefore elected a Central Committee, which gave it a thoroughly representative character, and then the company wanted to treat the movement on a departmental basis. The movement had its fluctuations, till in 1888 they started another, and gave it a good send-off later by a series of striking demonstrations, of which there had been nothing hitherto like it, with the exception of the Exeter Hall meeting.

"Scotia" commenced his notes on November 9th, 1883.

M. T. Bass died on May 2nd, 1884, leaving two millions of money.

At the A.G.M. of 1884 they mapped out the society into thirteen districts, and for the first time directly elected E.C. representatives, who had hitherto been elected at the A.G.M. It would scarcely be believed that the opponents of the change urged that it was going back to the district system, which cost £600.

January 24th, 1885, witnessed the opening of the first branch in Ireland, at Belfast.

During all that year a discussion had gone on in the society's organ, in the branches, and at the E.C. on the question of Parliamentary representation, and eventually a voluntary fund was opened, but the subscriptions hung fire. There was no heart in it at all, and the E.C. in May "regretted that the matter did not meet with the support from the branches that it was deserving of, and it was not considered expedient for it to take the initiative without a larger support."

The A.G.M. of 1885 met at the Co-operative Hall, Leicester, at which they passed a resolution affirming the desirability of having direct

representation in the House, inviting the members to subscribe 6d. each per annum, the E.C. to make the necessary scheme and to report to the next Congress.

Clement E. Stretton was appointed consulting engineer to the society. The Finance Committee's fees were raised from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d.

A domestic matter was brought up which had dragged its weary way with recriminations from the time of Harford's appointment. It was that Harford had received too high a salary for his first year of service as Secretary. It was brought up at the Bath Congress the year before, but no decision was made. J. Pilcher opened a correspondence upon it both in the "Review" and in the "Train," which paper had been started by Fred Evans, the ex-General Secretary.

Bell, of Edinburgh, and Pilcher, of Clapham Junction, fired at each other. At this Congress a motion was brought up which aimed at Pilcher's expulsion, but it was rejected. Pilcher moved a resolution at this Congress: "That this Congress desires to impress upon all classes of railway servants the advantages which the co-operative movement has conferred upon the working classes, and particularly urges upon the members of this society to do all in their power to further and extend the movement." The mover had for some time written on Co-operation in the "Review."

During the year there was a General Election, which increased Labour representation in Parliament, during which Joseph Arch was elected to represent North-West Norfolk, defeating Lord Henry Bentinck.

The society at this time was very active in promoting safety appliances, and arranged a coupling competition at Nine Elms. F. A. Channing, M.P., brought in a Railway Regulation Bill on behalf of the society, an object of the society since its formation, and which Earl De la War had brought forward two years before. The Bill passed its Second Reading without a division, and was referred to a Select Committee of the House of Commons. Channing urged that railway companies were careless in their regard of human life, which statement Sir Joseph Pease combatted. John Wilson, who had been elected for Houghton-le-Spring, said the want of a railway representative in the House was never more felt than in the discussion which was taking place. Railway safety had a good Press boom. A. J. Mundella, the Member for Sheffield, was a wholehearted supporter, and in a speech to his constituents gave it that in eleven years 6,584 railway servants had been killed and 26,034 injured, and offered to stand for a Bill which would guard against unreasonable hours worked, because men could not perform delicate and difficult duties for twenty hours at a stretch. He hoped to see that Bill pass into law.

For several years the safety of railway servants was a chief feature of the society's work, and they took advantage of every opportunity to urge it, till Mr. Channing's Railway Regulation Act was passed. They boomed the accidents, and urged by a deputation to

Earl De la War for a railway return of long hours worked, and it was obtained early in 1887, which Parliamentary return showed an appalling number of long hours worked, and gave the number of cases of twelve hours being worked and the number from twelve to eighteen hours. The second return he obtained gave the same particulars as the first, but also showed percentages to the number of persons employed.

The Congress of 1886, which met at Brighton, also took up all these phases which had been dealt with during the year, and yet once more had a splendid Press voice. During the discussion which ensued it was said that more irregularities would have been reported, but that the parties concerned squared it, which simple statement did more for the Press boom than anything else. Even the comic papers took the matter in hand, and "Funny Folks" gave a day-by-day diary, which paper was then the best comic extant:—

"Monday.—Noticed just in time that that ass Simmonds had turned on the white light instead of the red, and only spared myself from colliding with the down express by half-a-minute. S'll pay through the nose for this little job, I reckon.

"Tuesday.—A few words with Simmonds concerning that affair of yesterday. He wanted to get off paying for his mistake, but we argued the matter, and in the end he stumped up. He says he hopes I won't catch him tripping again this week, for his wages are pretty nearly gone already in 'squaring' drivers.

"Wednesday.—Hang that Simmonds! He's been at his old tricks again. Flashed his electric signal at the wrong time; as near as a toucher ran me into the embankment. See if I don't make him smart for his stupidity, that's all.

"Thursday.—Poor Simmonds! He parted with his last half-crown like a lamb. Fancied his frequent blunders must be unnerving him. Later on convinced that such was the case; for what did the fellow do but forgot to show his green, which would have led to a smash if I had not spotted the error and slowed up in time."

The Congress decided by twenty-nine votes to twenty-one to give Orphan Fund benefits to stepchildren, thus enlarging the benefits of the fund the second time. It was also decided to ask for tenders for printing the "Railway Review," which were submitted to the A.G.M. of 1887, when in an open tender the contract was secured by the Co-operative Printing Society, and the "Railway Review" of December 9th, 1887, bears the imprint of the Co-operative Printing Society, which it has borne ever since. Only a fortnight before the "Review" was for the first time published at 55, Colebrooke Row, the Executive having purchased the place as an office.

It was not till August, 1892, that the Co-operative Printing Society, on the recommendation of the Auditors, J. E. Williams and J. J. Hornby, did the whole of the society's printing work. Like other co-operative plans, this had the opposition of the official element. Pilcher had made his first achievement by the "Review," and it was naturally only a matter of time when they would do it all. It is also worthy of note that

at the time of holding the A.G.M. at Brighton they had no co-operative society there. Pilcher spoke of it, and a little later, in his notes, told of the effort then being made to establish a co-operative society there, the home of Dr. King, who issued the first co-operative journal from that place. In 1922 the Co-operative Congress will be held at Brighton, the home for the last few years of the old co-operative advocate, George Jacob Holyoake.

During two years Tom Watson had been getting about the country organising, and the membership was growing. Year by year there had been an increasing note of confidence in the society, and Harford reported that, though the membership of 1884 had increased only by 387, yet the finance of the society had increased by £5,918 18s. 2d., so that the trend was upwards in membership and finance. In 1886 there was mounting expenditure owing to increased activities, but it left £5,000 income above expenditure. Although the increase in membership was small, it was growing, and there was "reason to hope that the society would be raised to such a position as to become a power to be reckoned with." Harford also asked them to stretch out the arm of self-help. For 1887, although the expenditure was extraordinary owing to the Northumberland miners' strike, and had added to it the defence of the driver in the Hexthorpe disaster, under the brilliant advocacy of Tindal Atkinson, he obtaining the driver's acquittal of the charge of manslaughter, yet the savings were £6,478, and the saving was such that they could that year afford to raise the Trustees' salaries from £1 to £2.

Harford, referring to the staggering indictment of long hours shown by the Parliamentary return, said that return had placed a new weapon in their hands, and would help forward Channing's Regulation Amendment Bill, which gave the Board of Trade power to enforce the absolute block system, interlocking of points and signals, a continuous automatic brake, and various other improvements that needed putting into practice.

During 1887, though the Midland signalmen had a movement on to reduce the hours of labour, the company inadvisedly thought it a time to reduce wages, which imparted bitterness to the movement. The men issued some excellently worded manifestos, and the "Birmingham Daily News" (Birmingham being its headquarters) gave them excellent publicity, and backed it by a long strongly worded leader in their favour. In the next they tried their hand upon the enginemen, which action led the enginemen to strike in August, 1887. The men had tried to avert the strike by appealing to the directors to suspend their circular till August 11th, but this was refused by the directors and officials, who would not accept this effort to temporise and discuss matters, so that on August 4th at midnight they struck, as the circular was to take effect the next day. This was the notice issued by the men:—

"The Central Committee of the locomotive engine drivers and firemen of the Midland Railway desire to place before the public the

true reasons which have influenced them in ceasing work, so that no misapprehension may arise through any inconvenience that may be caused to the public by the cessation of traffic upon this railway. For twenty years the men had worked under an arrangement which guaranteed them a week's wages, and very good care was always taken that the wages were well earned before they were paid. July 15th last a notice was posted in the various engine-sheds, without any intimation to the men, to the effect that on August 5th this arrangement would be superseded by one setting forth that they would not be entitled to a full week's wages unless it was earned. The circular went so far as to allege that experience had shown that the system of payment for six days per week had worked badly and tended to give enginemen and firemen an interest in shirking their work. This accusation was most galling to the men, who had always honestly striven to perform their duties, and to whom the public are indebted for the safety and the excellence of the train service for which the Midland has been noted for many years past. However, the affront has had little weight in determining the action resolved upon. The main objection to the new arrangement is, that being always at the company's call, restricted as to residence, and not allowed to leave home or engage in trade of any description, directly or indirectly, but compelled to devote themselves exclusively to the service of the company, they claim as a matter of right and fair dealing a week's wages so long as such service lasts. Further, under the old system a fair distribution of work was assured, but under the proposed new arrangement great power would be placed in the hands of the local foremen of showing favour to particular men, as has been experienced on other lines, to the detriment of others. The Central Committee have used every endeavour to avert this crisis by appealing to the chairman and secretary of the company for the withdrawal or postponement of the notice until after the delegates have had an interview with the board of directors on August 11th, but every appeal has been without the least effect. At the last moment, before finally deciding to cease work, the men, through their delegates, expressed their willingness to accept a fair compromise, to which no response has been made. The responsibility for the crisis and accompanying evils and inconvenience therefore rests with the directors and officers of the company.

“ On behalf of the Central Committee,

“ JOHN NEEDHAM, Chairman.

“ JAMES LESTER, Secretary.”

They also issued this :—

“ To Railwaymen, Engine Drivers, and Others.

“ This is to give notice that the Midland engine drivers and firemen have withdrawn from their employment in consequence of unjust regulations issued to them, and in consequence they require men. The Midland enginemen appeal to all men not to injure their prospects by accepting such employment.

“ CENTRAL COMMITTEE, Derby.”

At midnight they drew their fires and left them on the road; and soon telegrams were flying about, and Harford and Watson were assisting the men. The usual lies were issued by the company, and as usual when a strike takes place the old crocks dismissed came to the rescue of the company, and, sad to relate, men from other companies assisted to defeat their fellows. Questions were asked in Parliament, but the men were defeated by betrayal; betrayed by the Midland men themselves and betrayed by men from other lines.

One of the most interesting speeches of that time was made by Mr. Douse, of Nottingham, the veteran co-operator, who has in his work as a co-operator passed through various stages of office in the movement to that of President of the Congress.

Some of the men were taken back at reduced wages, and one of the victims was Alfred Mear, who enters into our history here. Three articles covering a page appeared in the "Railway Review," headed "The Midland Strike. Reflections by an Ex-Official," which seemed to be Evans' hand. They dealt with the outcome of strikes on the Midland and other railways, showed the causes which led to them, and what was imposed upon the men after.

As showing how the Midland men were fighting the battles of others, the M. S. & L., in view of what had occurred on the Midland, considered they were justified in withdrawing the arrangement entered into in January of that year between Mr. Parker, the loco. superintendent, and the men.

At the Trades Union Congress of 1887 Mr. Harford was elected on the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress.

The A.G.M. of the same year met under the shadow of the Hexthorpe disaster. It was decided, on the casting vote of Garrity, Chairman of the E.C., to accept the recommendation of the purchase of 55, Colebrooke Row, which had been provisionally secured. On the motion of Carlisle the E.C., by fifty votes to three, was asked to endeavour to secure an amalgamation or a working agreement with the Scotch Society. Mexboro' moved: "That an effort be made to obtain the direct representation of railwaymen in the House of Commons, the candidate to be a member of the society and to be supported by it." Battersea No. 1 moved an amendment: "That the E.C. be instructed to carry the principle into effect." Both were defeated by a large majority. That old debate makes interesting reading, and the arguments used against it now appear exceedingly childish. The Midland strike loomed large in that Congress because of the disbursements from the Protection Fund, and an appeal against expulsion from those who had betrayed their fellows for upholding the E.C. in their payment of the Protection Grant was carried by thirty-three votes to thirteen; and for the expulsion of the offending ones by thirty-nine votes to four.

Sunter, the secretary of the Associated, sent a telegram to the President of the Congress, Mr. Macliver, as follows:—

"By a leader in the 'Leeds Mercury' of to-day you, the President, are reported having said that your society was dragged

into the Midland strike by the action of another society. As General Secretary of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, I wish to inform you that our society gave no encouragement to our members to strike, neither have we paid any members Strike Pay."

The President said he had made no such statement; and a wire was sent Sunter to that effect.

At the commencement of 1888 Clement E. Stretton resigned his connection with the society.

During May of the same year Mr. Channing moved in the House of Commons: "That in the opinion of this House it is desirable to dealt more effectively with preventable causes of accidents to railway servants and the public, and to reduce the excessive hours of labour among several classes of railway servants; and that it is expedient to further extend by legislation the powers of the Board of Trade to insist on the adoption by railway companies of more adequate arrangements to secure the safety of their servants and the public, and to obtain from railway companies periodical returns of all cases in which their servants have been on duty without an interval of nine hours' rest." Maclaren, of Crewe, seconded it. It drew from Sir Michael Hicks-Beach a sympathetic reply, instead of meeting it with a direct negative, which Mundella congratulated Channing upon.

Another return had just been issued giving the long hours up to eighteen per day, and where duty had been resumed after having worked twelve hours with only seven hours between. The return again showed an appalling state of things, and could not but make the House and the public sympathetic, more to secure their own safety than that of railway workers. Close on the heels of that was a return of accidents to railwaymen for the year 1887, which showed 422 killed and 2,075 injured. So the society urged more efficient inspection by Inspectors of the Board of Trade.

At the A.G.M. held at Preston in 1888 Ireland claimed representation at the Congress, when it was shown that Ireland had only 190 members and Scotland 237. Byrne, a Trustee, died, and John Pilcher was elected to fill the vacancy. A meeting had been arranged with the Scotch Society and they had failed to come to an agreement, which fact the Congress noted with regret. The terms of the Scotch Society were such that they could not be agreed to. Darlington moved: "That this Congress approves the programme of conditions of employment, of time and wages, as issued to the North-Eastern members, and as to the decisions of the Conference held at Darlington, July 1st and August 1st, 1888." After an amendment by Cardiff to refer it to the E.C., it was defeated. Birmingham moved: "That this Congress sympathises with the N. E. men in their efforts to improve their position, and endorses their proposals on the question of time and recommends the men on other lines to take up the question with a view to making it a universal movement." This was carried by forty-eight votes to three. Albert Pilcher was appointed clerk to the General Office.

This was a period of advancing trade, and so in 1889 there was a general disposition to make an advance and endeavour to obtain a reduction of hours and increase of wages. The E.C. determined to take a plebiscite of the whole of the members on the eight-hour question. They sanctioned a movement of the goods guards to obtain a reduction of their hours, and offered every encouragement to them. They also sanctioned a signalmen's movement. The E.C. were in danger of stultifying their own resolves of a national movement by the granting of these local and sectional efforts, but all were disclaimed as being such because they had obtained the sanction of the governing authority. The signalmen held various conferences of a national scope, one being held at Derby and another at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London. The movement embraced both society and non-society men, but it was led by the society men. Sabin, of Birmingham, who, owing to the loss of a limb and another one defective, had been obliged to retire from work, took up the secretaryship with the usual ardour that he threw into everything that he undertook. The movement was a considerable success both in the reduction of hours and an increase of wages, the larger increase coming from the readjustment of Sunday duties and payment for those duties.

The E.C. was exceptionally busy during the whole year, and as sectional aspirations were here, there, and everywhere they resolved on a national movement for the reduction of hours, into which all others should be merged. They formulated that programme and submitted it for approval to the A.G.M. of 1889, which was held at Hull. That A.G.M. was a turning-point in the history of the society, and among the delegates was a greater proportion of middle-aged and old men than any other Congress since, though there was a blend of youth with the conservatism of old age, G. W. Alcock being the boy of the Congress. Out of the delegates of that Congress at that time and in future times many became its officers. At that A.G.M. Alfred Mears, one of the victims of the Midland enginemen's strike, was elected as Organising Secretary, with the determination to push forward the national programme. They decided that the best way to achieve such was an influx of new members. The Congress dismissed the Treasurer, Mr. T. Watson, and W. Ellis, of Battersea, who had been Auditor, was elected in his stead. Wimbhurst and Robins, Trustees, were dismissed, and Phillip Hewlitt and G. W. Alcock were elected Trustees, with J. Pilcher, who was not dismissed. The said dismissals arose out of the prize draw for the Orphan Fund, which had been in vogue some years. Hewlitt and Alcock remain the oldest officials of the society. At that Congress was E. Garrity, in later years elected Assistant Secretary, also Walter Hudson, afterwards President, who managed an assembly with more tact and skill than any of his tribe, and later became an Organising Secretary. P. Tevenan was a delegate and was later elected Organising Secretary. Another delegate, Mr. Duffin, of Southampton, was one of the old Organising Secretaries. This was his last active appearance in the councils of the A.S.R.S. Few of those

taking part in that Congress—though we are but eighteen years in our history of that period—are living to-day.

“Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten as a dream dies at the opening day.”

Two delegates elected to attend were not present, it being the time of pressure by the Midland. J. T. Grove, of Keighley, was precluded from taking his duties as an E.C. man, also John Abbott, of Wigston, one of the old pioneers of the A.S.R.S. and a delegate at its first General Meeting in 1872. For the first time in the history of the society the delegates agreed to announce their names, and so from now onwards we associate the names of delegates with their districts. It was the most businesslike delegation of any Congresses that had preceded it, though not free from personalities. The national movement for shorter hours was: “(1) That a week’s pay be guaranteed to all grades of railwaymen who by the terms of their agreement have to devote the whole of their time to the service of the company employing them. (2) That the maximum hours of duty be ten per day, excepting platelayers, whose hours shall be nine per day. For shunters in busy goods yards and signalmen in important signal boxes and boxes always open eight hours shall be the maximum. In every case each day’s duty to stand by itself, and not to be counted as part of the week’s labour. (3) That overtime be paid for at the rate of time and a-quarter, Sunday duty at time and a-half.” Such was the brief programme. George Langlands, who was writing in the “Railway Review,” as “Geordie,” was the mover, and Walter Hudson, the secretary of the Darlington movement, was its seconder. Speaker after speaker supported the programme wholeheartedly, and never before was there such unanimity of opinion as on that occasion. The debate closed with the words of the President MacIver, who gave it as the most important resolution that had ever engaged the attention of their Congresses, expressed gratification at their unanimity. Strengthening signs were evident to hearten them, and they had influence at their back as they never had before. “I ask you now to pass these resolutions with one voice, and that you will all rise up and carry them by acclamation.” The delegates rose to their feet and passed them with extraordinary enthusiasm—with waving arms and hand-clapping. It was a good augury for the new movement.

From that time onward large and enthusiastic meetings were held at all the important places on the various systems, and men with public influence supported them. It was a time of booming trade, and every token was in their favour. The one mistake of the Congress was the refusal to set up a new scale, with a 3d. premium. David Bunday, of Bow, uttered a prophecy that other societies would start up if this scale was not passed. It proved to be a true one, as the General Railway Workers’ Union started. It was the second fatal error a Congress had made, the first being that of a refusal to start a Protection Fund in 1880, an act of incredible folly that led to the formation of the Associated.

During the term of his Secretaryship Harford had quietly fulfilled his duties, but now there were gathering about him disruptive influences. Part of it was his own folly over financial matters, but the chief intriguer was W. Foreman, then Sub-Editor of the "Review." The sugar bounties question, started by Mr. G. Shipton, secretary of the London Trades Council, and Mr. Drummond, the secretary of the London Society of Compositors, was brought to the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress. W. Foreman used his advantage to circulate pamphlets of his own to correspondents of the paper on the matter. Printing and other matters came into it. Harford was always against the Co-operative Printing Society and in favour of Virtue's and the Hansard Publishing Company. Harford felt that an intriguer at his near elbow was not an advantage, and dismissed Foreman, which added to his trouble, and employed Fred Maddison in his stead, a compositor and councillor at Hull, who had been President of the Trades Congress. Foreman was afterwards sent to Ireland as Organiser. When he died it was found by the records at the Irish Office, though a telegram from the N. E. had been sent that Garrity, who was sent over to Ireland, was not to have access to his papers. However, they were handed over to him, and it was found that he was the writer of a series of articles to the "Railway Herald," a capitalistic organ, in which he criticised the A.S.R.S. and personalities in it, the foremost personality criticised being Garrity himself. He took the title "Conspirator," and such he was. The follies of Harford gave his enemies their chance, and they took it.

Domestic troubles, however, never interfered with the movement, and never once hindered the onward march of the society. The membership had during Harford's term to the end of 1888 doubled itself. The balance of funds had doubled also, less £100. In 1889 the membership made a bound upward of 7,500, and the balance of funds by £8,000, the next year being just the same, and the succeeding years going higher and higher. The flowing tide was ours, the harvest of effort was being reaped, we were getting to be thorough-paced Trade Unionists, and soon we were to loom large in the public eye. New writers were appearing. "East Anglian," of the G. E., used his pen. The Great Eastern had been the most backward and the men the most timid of any system, with perhaps the exception of the little Tilbury. So careful was the Great Eastern of the honour of its directors, and so anxious to place stumbling-blocks in the men's path, that the chairman of a meeting, W. Payne, the secretary of the Canning Town Branch, and one who helped to break down the timidity, was called to Liverpool Street because one speaker at a meeting over which he presided had said: "Carlyle has said that there were only three classes, workers, beggars, and thieves. The directors were not workers, they were not beggars, they were —." Payne was asked why he allowed this, and he naïvely asked how could he tell what a speaker was going to say.

This little incident was the beginning of a new spirit of self-consciousness and dignity. The Congress had announced itself by names. Men appeared on platforms, giving their names. Timidity was going, and men were finding their souls. They had begun to live, to speak, to act. The railway world was moving, and it moved onward, and a decade had nearly quadrupled the membership and worked immense reforms for safety, was making for more safety still, had decreased the hours, which were still falling. Wages had mounted up, and the upward trend did not stay itself. Self-help was grasped, and, to use Evans' old motto, "Forward you must go." And they did go, with longer strides and quicker pace.

The year 1890 was one of movements, of meetings, and the only evil was that constantly recurring danger: To look at the grade and forget the mass, and in the forgetting bring down the grade.

The G.R.W.U. had started, fostered by John Burns, who did some splendid propaganda work, and De Mattoes and others of the Fabian group of Socialists. Some of the speakers thought they could best advance their cause by slanging the A.S.R.S. and exalting themselves as the true fighters, and that the old society was a friendly society and of no value for Trade Union purposes. The G.R.W.U. had its teething troubles like our own. Its president, a tailor, did not practice in his trade the Trade Union principles of his platform speeches, and that brought trouble. Factions arose, and Champion Watson, its secretary, had no easy time of it. Family troubles were not confined to branches; they strutted on public platforms. At one of these meetings the present writer went to view proceedings, and there sat by his side an interested spectator who in later years gained so much notoriety. That was my first meeting with Walter Victor Osborne, then a young energetic Socialist and member of the Social Democratic Federation, and a member of the G.R.W.U. True to the principles that he held he refused to work overtime on the Great Eastern, and told them so, giving them his reasons.

At another meeting held at the Drovers' Hall, near the Caledonian Market, at which Harford, Garrity, Sam Lazenby, and the present writer were present, it was pandemonium let loose. He has a vision of a speaker whose mouth he could see was framing speech and whose swinging arms were meant to enforce speech, but not a sound could be heard owing to the uproar in the Hall. That speaker, a man named Turner, who was a printer by trade, but then employed as a checker on the G. E., was the stormy petrel of the G.R.W.U., and printed bills calling meetings to traduce its president. He put Alcock's name on the bills as a speaker, not one of which he attended, though he was a member of the G.R.W.U. as well as the A.S.R.S. For this committed offence of the ex-printer and the non-committed offence of Alcock both were expelled the union, and their branch, Bethnal Green, seceded from the G.R.W.U. and came over to the A.S.R.S. Bedford, its president, stood for the Parliamentary constituency of Norwich, with

Colman, of mustard fame. Alcock went to Norwich and interviewed the editor of "Daylight." The long interview with the editor included the exposure of Bedford's antecedents and practices, which appeared in two numbers of its issues. Whilst Athey, an old councillor of West Ham and a member of the Stratford Branch of the A.S.R.S., was working for Bedford, Alcock was working against him, and had his revenge, Bedford being defeated. Bedford, in turn, retaliated by giving an interview to Burgess, of the "Workman's Times"—by a coincidence Burgess was also the name of the editor and proprietor of "Daylight"—in which he dealt with the plots against him, and, *inter alia*, said Turner and Campion Watson, the secretary, had gone to Alcock's signal box, which was true.

Bedford threatened Alcock with action for libel. Investigation had been made, and it was found his prices were not the Trade Union ones, and charges had been made in the "Commonweal," then an anarchist organ, run by a man named Mowbray. Alcock received this from Bedford's solicitor: "It has come to the knowledge of my client that you intend at a meeting of the Bethnal Green Branch to repeat the unfounded and unjustifiable remarks of the 'Commonweal.' Take notice, that if you do repeat these my client will take legal proceedings against you." The charges were gone into and proved. Alcock then read the letter, held it aloft, and said: "Now notice men, James Bedford, sweater. Now let Bedford do what he likes."

The A.G.M. of the A.S.R.S. was then sitting and promised legal defence. It was never needed. However, after the first stage of the G.R.W.U. had passed the two unions worked comfortably together, and though little differences now and then appeared, under the secretaryship of Andrew Clarke and Tom Lowth, we worked together. The end of each as a name will be found in the chapter on "Fusion."

Those years of 1889-92 cannot be seen in their fulness apart from general history. It was a trade revival, and all the public events of that time are a psychological study. Andrew Mearns, the secretary of the Congregational Union, had written his pamphlet, "The Bitter Cry of Outcast London," which created discussions altogether outside the scope of the pamphlet. It was the theme of discussion by Labour, the churches, politicians, and all social reformers. Discussions nearly always widen reforming aims. This was one of them.

The London dock strike broke with dramatic suddenness, and was the direct outcome of what was then called the "New Unionism," but which soon aged with the old. It was splendidly led by John Burns and Tom Mann, both members of the A.S.E., and Socialists. In the subsequent settlement Cardinal Manning played an important part. That strike also led to the establishment of a London Conciliation Board, which has had a continued existence and done good service. The dock strike awakened Labour and aroused it to such a pitch of excitement as it never had before. So those of the new union and even those who were members of neither considered our union too sleepy, not realising that the best means would have been for them to have

come inside and roused us from our sleep and taught us what we ought to do.

In 1889 a remarkable demonstration was held on Newcastle Moor to urge the Darlington Programme. It had a wide echo, and shook the dry bones of the railway world and gave them life and activity.

That year the London Council, on the initiative of Stratford, was formed, and proved the birth of many more, and finally given an abiding place in our rules.

The "Railway Review" in Maddison's hands was vigorous. The accidents of Penistone and Armagh showed how valuable was our legal aid. The national programme went on through strife, tumults, strikes and threatened strikes, and many a triumph was won. The N. E. kept presenting their case with undiminished vigour. They met the Board, which was then under the presidency of J. Dent-Dent. The cases of rulleymen, grain warehousemen, vanmen, and loftmen, quayside and nightshift work were submitted to arbitration. Dr. Spence Watson was the arbitrator. The general movement went on in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. The Great Southern men of Ireland had ceased work and won. The G. N. men in Ireland were organising, and Tom Watson was sent down to help. A strike was imminent on the G. N., and the E.C. sanctioned it. The company, however, climbed down, concessions were made, and the strike averted. Matters were strained on the Midland owing to the dismissal of Kincaid and Dunne, but again reason won, and with it the men were victorious. In April the Great Southern and Western men at Cork struck without notice, and soon the strike spread. Archbishop J. W. Walsh and Michael Davitt intervened, and at a meeting the men of Cork, by 270 votes to 12, left their case in the hands of Walsh, Professor Galbraith, of Trinity College (who died shortly after), and Harford, and the men went back to work on the promise of the directors to consider their case. The men also struck on the Dublin and Wicklow line, which strike was disastrous all round. The N. E. men discussed the question of a strike, but left it in the hands of the Executive.

The South Wales men were also prosecuting their claims, and it looked at one time as if all South Wales would be in conflict. The Rhymney directors wisely discussed the matter with Mr. Harford, and he, with Mr. Lundie, was to arrange matters. But unfortunately in the end matters did not improve, and the Rhymney, Barry, Bute Docks, and Taff directors decided to stand or fall together. So did the men. The Taff men tendered 1,082 notices; Rhymney, 184 out of 194; and Barry, 217, which was a still larger percentage, to terminate on August 6th. The four companies' directors, having met on July 26th, delivered their ultimatum, the answer to which was the one word "strike," and strike they did. It was emphatic, decisive, complete. From the time of the strike till the settlement was successfully negotiated not a wheel turned. The companies were hopelessly beaten. In a word, the system was paralysed. Why they ever ventured to put their case to the test of war remains a mystery. The Press was in the men's favour ;

so also were the railwaymen of the United Kingdom. Harford, our Secretary, and Inskip, the lawyer and the layman, met and adjusted matters. It was one of the best lessons for unity ever presented to railwaymen.

Let us leave these events and turn to the A.G.M. of 1900, held at Belfast; here once more we have domestic trouble. There had been a series of prize draws on behalf of the Orphan Fund, and the Finance Committee which had dealt with them in 1889 had not met with the approval of the members. The accounts of that prize draw were placed in the London and Counties Bank, adjacent to the Agricultural Hall. The Committee, as we have seen, were dismissed the year before, and included the Treasurer, Mr. Watson, and two of the Trustees. Harford resented their dismissal. The prize draw itself was an illegality. When the Committee were dismissed they refused their sanction to the withdrawal of the money from the London and Counties Bank to place it in the National and Provincial Bank, the society's bankers, and would not hand it over to the new Trustees. Elgood being friendly with all the old, the new Trustees and Treasurer sought the advice of Shaen, Roscoe, Massey, and Company, of Bedford Row, and writs were issued against the old officers, after which they consented to the release of the money. They were expelled the society by the E.C.

These three reports will explain the difficulties of that period:—

“To the Executive Committee.

“Gentlemen,—I beg to inform you that the various matters which you have entrusted me to carry out have been dealt with in accordance with your instructions. The General Secretary resumed active duties on July 30th. The sum of £1,115 18s. 7d. having been paid by Mr. T. Watson, your late Treasurer, into the National and Provincial Bank on July 23rd and the balance of £11 13s. on July 30th, which when paid released the General Secretary from his suspension and reinstated him in authority. He, however, having to leave town at that time in order to look after the interests of our members in Wales, desired me to remain in charge of the office during his absence, and this I have continued to do up to the present moment, keeping him informed and consulting him in matters of importance from the above-named date. The important strike on the Taff Vale, Rhymney, and Bute Docks Railways was conducted and concluded by the General Secretary. The strike of the Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford railwaymen now being carried on was commenced and is being conducted by Mr. W. Foreman (Agent for Ireland), with the sanction of the General Secretary.

“Yours faithfully,

“H. C. MADY.”

“TRUSTEES’ REPORT.

“August 28th, 1890.

“Gentlemen,—In accordance with a resolution passed at your last meeting we obtained legal advice respecting the £1,129 11s. 7d. from

Mr. Thomas Watson, late Treasurer, and acting thereon directed that proceedings be taken against him under the Trade Union Act. Affidavits were made by Mr. Pilcher, one of the Trustees, and Mr. Welfare, a member of the E.C. on July 24th, but on the same date a bank advice was received at the General Office for £1,115 18s. 7d. paid into the bank by Mr. Watson, and the proceedings were therefore stopped. The balance of £13 13s. was said to be in the hands of the General Secretary, but it has since been paid into the bank by Mr. Watson. As the late Treasurer did not comply with the notices served upon them to transfer the money from the London and County Bank, we instructed the solicitors to proceed with an application to the Court of Chancery, which was done on the 2nd inst., and an order granted for the transfer of the money; but as the late Trustees had now signified their willingness to sign for the transfer, the order of the court was not taken out. The money will be drawn from the London and County Bank as soon as we have access to the cheque book and obtain the signature of the General Secretary. The solicitors' bill of costs in connection with these proceedings amounts to £31 15s. 4d.; and we also have to pay the legal expenses incurred by the London and County Bank, which amounts to three guineas.

“ Having noticed in the financial statement for the last half-year an item of £3 9s. charged as Trustees' salary and expenses, we wish to explain that this refers to the late Trustees, £2 being Mr. Wilmhurst's salary for 1889, and £1 9s. expenses paid to Mr. Robins for going with us to the bank, and to Mr. Elgood in February with the society's securities.

“ G. PILCHER, } Trustees.”
 G. ALCOCK, }
 P. HEWLITT, }

“ FINANCE COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

“ Gentlemen,—In accordance with your instructions, we met weekly instead of fortnightly during the General Secretary's suspension, and have continued to do so during his prolonged absence from the General Office up to the present time. A special meeting was held on the 15th instant for the purpose of drawing a cheque for £150 required by Mr. Foreman on account of the strike in Ireland. The Committee were again specially summoned on the 21st instant to consider an urgent application from Mr. Foreman for a further sum of £170, but as only one of the Trustees was able to attend a cheque could not be drawn; and if this could have been done it would have been of no use without the General Secretary's signature, which could not be obtained, as he had left Cardiff without informing the General Office where he was going. Considering the urgency of the case, Messrs. Hewlitt, Ellis, and Mady waited upon the bank manager, who consented, under the circumstances, to honour a cheque signed by two Trustees and countersigned by Mr. H. C. Mady in lieu of the General Secretary. The Committee therefore met on the following morning, when the cheque was drawn and taken

to the bank. The manager also promised on receipt of the cheque he would wire an order for the money in Dublin.

“ All claims have been paid, and a cheque for £1,000 was forwarded to the General Secretary at his request to meet the requirements in Wales. All moneys received have been paid into the bank, with the exception of £70 3s. 6d., to which we called your attention at the last meeting, and three further sums amounting to £18 19s. 6½d., for which receipts were given on July 11th, but the Post Office orders have not been seen at the Office since the General Secretary's suspension.

“ On going through Messrs. Elgood's bill we found an item of 10s. charged as Messrs. Robins and Wimhurst's expenses for attending at his office and signing the dividend warrants which they had previously refused to sign, and although we did not feel justified in disallowing the amount, we think instructions should be given that in future they are not to allow any officer or member of the society any expenses.

“ The Prize Draw Committee have succeeded in getting a portion of the orders which have been given for goods cancelled, and the remainder they have decided to offer for sale at a reduction of 20 per cent.

“ We are, gentlemen, yours fraternally,

“ J. PILCHER.
G. ALCOCK.
P. HEWLITT.
E. ELLIS.
A. GREGORY.”

It may be said that the prize draw, which had been run for years without any legal interference, was, after the late Finance Committee was expelled, legally barred, which is an explanation of the last paragraph, and the explanation of the ban is easily understood.

The following was received by the society :—

“ Director of Public Prosecutions Department, Treasury,

“ Whitehall,

“ 20th June, 1890.

“ My attention having been drawn to the lottery promoted by you in connection with the Railway Servants' Orphan Fund, and called ' Grand Prize-Drawing for 1890,' I beg to inform you that such scheme is illegal and subjects all persons concerned therein to the penalties proposed by the Act passed for the suppression of illegal lotteries.

“ I am, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

“ A. K. STEPHENSON, Director of Public Prosecutions.

“ To W. Ellis, Esq. (Treasurer), H. C. Mady (Secretary),
Railway Servants' Orphan Fund, 55, Colbrooke Row, Islington, N.”

A further letter of July 7th was received from him calling attention to the fact that no acknowledgment had been received, and unless he received an assurance that it had been abandoned he should take proceedings. The draw was therefore called off.

Harford ranged himself with the old officers in their policy of obstruction. The Chairman of the E.C. during that year was J. E. Williams, who later succeeded Mr. R. Bell as Secretary of the society. There were two sides to the question, and long before the Congress of 1889 a cabal was being formed against Harford, which reached a higher degree of development in 1889. The chief actors were men on the North-Eastern, particularly George Langlands, of Newcastle Central, and Holden, of Sunderland, aided by W. Foreman. Unfortunately, Harford, by his obstructive tactics, played into their hands. The Congress at Belfast decided to send for J. E. Williams, which instruction Harford did not carry out, and had not a delegate taken precautions to ensure his attendance the matter would not have been probed. J. E. Williams did attend, and anyone who knew the character of J. E. Williams knew that he would act straightforward and do all things with a high sense of honour.

The E.C. had suspended Mr. Harford, and in pursuance of his obstructive tactics, when suspended, he locked up the cabinet in his office, and so the work of the society was held up. Harford having dismissed Foreman, the E.C. had sent him to Ireland. The matter was gone into at considerable length and not without warmth, and a motion was framed that Harford be removed from office. It was defeated by twenty-eight to twenty. Harford on his defence brought charges of espionage and uncharitable dealings, and asserted that he was surrounded by a band of conspirators. He named George Langlands, but he exempted Foreman from his charge. The essence of the matter was that Harford was obstructive, that his enemies pursued him by unfair tactics, and though he exempted Foreman from the charge his was the chief hand in the affair. The present writer can speak with some knowledge, as he was drawn into the cabal, and took part in it—in after years he regretted it, having come to respect Harford, the more so when he changed his tactics and came into line with the wishes of authority. Letters from Foreman at this period mirror his acts.

The Congress appointed E. Garrity as Assistant Secretary, John Dobson as Organising Secretary, and John Ball, one of the Irish victims, as clerk at the Head Office. Foreman was appointed to Ireland. A scale for a 3d. premium was sanctioned. Sam Lazenby was elected on the Finance Committee, and W. Ellis as Treasurer. Elgood and Sons, solicitors, were deposed, and Messrs. Shaen and Roscoe, of 8, Bedford Row, were appointed solicitors.

In the closing days of 1900 it looked as if a strike would take place on the North-Eastern. During December they balloted on the question

of whether they should strike to enforce the national programme. The ballot paper was as follows:—

A.S.R.S.—N. E. RAILWAYMEN'S BALLOT CARD.

Kindly sign under.

Are you in favour of the national hours programme and an advance of 3s. per week for platelayers?

Are you prepared to enforce your demands if called upon to do so?.....

Are you a member of a Trade Union Society?

If so, name it

Voter's name

Voter's occupation

Voter's station

Please return on or before November 20th, 1900.

Out of 12,000 ballot papers sent out 3,187 were returned. On the first question 3,129 voted yes and 59 against. On the second question 2,636 were in favour and 551 against.

The unions represented in the voting were as follows: Dockers' Union, 61; National Labour Union, 161; G.R.W.U., 298; A.S.R.S., 1,246; and 1,451 in no union at all. Of the N. E. drivers there were 1,350, and 143 voted; 965 were in the A.S.R.S. There were 1,350 firemen, and 145 voted; 420 goods guards, and 86 voted; 550 mineral guards, and 86 voted; 300 passenger guards, and 43 voted; 550 shunters, and 166 voted; 1,781 signalmen, and 471 voted; 1,340 porters, and 150 voted; 486 goods porters voted; 3,000 platelayers, and 1,065 voted, 784 of whom were in no society. Of the other grades 489,156 voted, 132 voting "Yes" and 24 "No." Of the forty-three branches eight did not vote at all. These were: Middlesbrough Nos. 1 and 2, Stockton, Ferry Hill, Shildon, York, Scarborough, and Selby.

Wagh proposed, and Hudson seconded: "That this Committee regret that the result of the post-card ballot does not warrant them approaching the directors at the present time, as they feel confident that only when they have the body of men at their backs determined to carry out their demands can they hope to be successful."

Hudson also moved: "That as the line of action marked out by the Committee had not been carried out by the branches and the men, we hereby decide to appeal to the district committees asking for their alternative."

They considered the question of the north division separating themselves from the south, and presenting their case, but the meeting turned it down, and in the end decided almost unanimously to suspend the agitation for the hours programme for the time being and to concentrate on organisation. Meetings were, however, held at Newcastle, Hull, Darlington, Sunderland, and York, and 1,400 notices were handed in

to the North-Eastern at York on the next day. As a result the men secured six days to the week, payment for Sunday duty as a distinct day, shunters forty-eight hours, platelayers 2s. per week increase within a radius and thirteen beyond that. The A.S.R.S., the G.R.W.U., and the Labourers' Union had united together, which only showed that had the men but manifested courage they might have had a larger gain without a strike.

During the year there was a conference of the Irish branches held at the Workmen's Hall, Wellington Quay, Dublin, and as certain people had wished to separate Ireland from the rest of their fellow workers it had a good effect of uniting them among themselves and making a stronger bond with their brethren across the Channel. A report of the proceedings covering thirty-one printed pages was issued.

During these quiet years, of which period Harford had been captain, we had been gaining ground in reforms, in wisdom, and in strength. The membership had risen from less than 5,000 to 26,360. And still it was to be "Excelsior." The funds were not far short of £100,000. Now we turn to a stirring chapter.

Chapter XIV.

THE STRIKE THAT FAILED—AND SUCCEEDED.

THE dying year of 1900 witnessed the settlement of the Newcastle and Hull disputes, which had looked like ending in a rupture. In these two cases the A.S.R.S. and the G.R.W.U. worked amicably together. The companies who had ignored them began negotiations when the terms of the notice had expired, and matters were adjusted. The signalmen on the Midland were angry because they were refused relief to attend to society duties, and in yet other ways the company was encroaching upon their liberties. John Abbott, of Wigston, and J. T. Grove, of Keighley, were two conspicuous cases. They therefore directed this to the board:—

“AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF RAILWAY SERVANTS.

“To the Honourable Board of the Directors of the M. R. Company.

“Gentlemen,—A difficulty having arisen in relation to leave of absence being granted to signalmen in your employ to attend meetings in connection with the above society, to which they have been elected by their fellow workers, we are directed by the Executive Committee to request your honourable board to grant an interview to the undermentioned deputation for the purpose of urging the claims of the signalmen to be allowed to take part in the government of the society in conjunction with other grades of servants in your employ. An early intimation that your board concedes our application will oblige.

“Yours truly,

“GEORGE GREEN, Leicester.

“THOMAS HARDY, Moira.

“JAMES GROVE, Keighley.”

The company received the deputation and agreed to their request, when the service would admit of such, but they could make no exceptional regulations with regard to them.

All the then happenings were soon blotted out by the outstanding fact of the Scottish railway strike, which began in December, 1900, and which waged for a month over nearly all Scotland. The men had met and decided that unless their hours were reduced they would strike, and strike they did. In Scotland more than in any part of the United Kingdom the men worked long hours; and they had asked for a ten-hour day. The consensus of opinion up to that time was against legislative enactment. A small section of Trade Unionists who were Socialists was for Parliamentary action, not only with regard to

railways, but other forms of industry. But this struggle won over many to Parliamentary action. The Scottish railwaymen, irrespective of what union they were in favour of, met on a common platform, so that Mr. W. Bell, of Edinburgh, was able to say, referring to a proposal for federation early in December, 1900: "One of the most significant signs of progress among railwaymen is the fact that four generals, each with big battalions ready for the fray, could meet on one platform with the Federation flag fluttering overhead, and swear allegiance to a common cause is certainly a sign of advancement. Were the associations now generalised by Messrs. Harford, Tait, Watson, and Sunter to agree upon a certain line of action—which we must assume would be reasonable and just—we would have no more 'stick-in-the-mud' scenes, as we have had lately on the N. E. and on our Scottish roads." The campaign for shorter hours was in the main engineered by the Scotch Society, with the others more than looking on, but as the Scotch Society at that time was the strongest in numbers in Scotland it was bound to take the leading part in any action, the others advising. Bell said: "Our members are not standing in the way. At the recent meeting there was a serious ring about it; not unlike a fellow taking his coat off. Whatever is resolved upon let them be sure of their goal."

On Sunday, December 24th, they struck, and soon the heather was on fire. The Scottish system was paralysed, and the companies running north were seriously delayed. The men struck without legal notice and against the judgment of their E.C. The leaders had preached patience, but the extraordinary long hours had broken all patience down. For over a month the strike raged. All the leaders of the railwaymen, and not a few others, were out and about among their men. John Burns, one of the advocates of a legislative enactment for shorter hours, held aloft the fiery cross. The speakers flitted about Scotland and also came over to England, where many enthusiastic meetings were held, many of them being presided over by Michael Davitt, the famous Irish Nationalist leader. The Englishmen collected money for the strikers. The Trustees of the A.S.R.S., on their own responsibility, advanced £5,000 to the Scottish Union on a promissory note, which the E.C. endorsed, and other unions contributed. The fight went on with bitterness, added to by the Scottish directors ejecting men who lived in their houses at Motherwell, and for a long time after the slogan was "Remember Motherwell."

The men fought well, but were beaten. Many blacklegs from England assisted the Scottish railways. Harford was never in such fine form as there. The United Democratic Club, held at Chancery Lane, instituted a Vigilance Committee, and Dalziel, who was then the writer of the "London Letter" on the "Scottish Leader," and afterwards became Member for Kirkcaldy, and in more recent years the conductor of the Coalition Press, which included "Lloyd's Weekly," "Reynolds's," and the "Daily Chronicle," was an active helper and was treasurer for moneys collected in London. Never perhaps in a railway strike was

the public so wholeheartedly on the side of the strikers. The long hours which the men worked appealed to their sympathies. Clergymen lent of their aid, and Principal Rainy and the Rev. J. McNeill, who had been at one time a railwayman, lent invaluable aid. But with politicians and other public men ranged on their side it failed—that is, in the immediate aspect, because it was one of the greatest successes in its after effects. A return issued at that time helped very much by its damning indictment of long hours, especially on the Scottish Railways.

On the 3rd of January Mr. Channing had a motion before the House of Commons when it went into Committee of Supply in the following terms: "That in the opinion of this House the excessive hours of labour imposed on railway servants by the existing arrangements of the railway companies of the United Kingdom constitute a grave source of injustice and also a constant source of danger both to the railway servants and the travelling public, and that it is expedient that the Board of Trade should obtain powers by legislation to issue orders when necessary directing the companies to limit the hours of special classes of their servants or to make such reasonable increase in any class of their servants as will obviate the necessity of overtime work." The debate took place, and vim was given to it by the fact that Lord Aberdeen had been asked by Tait and Harford to mediate, which he at once took steps to do, but found it hopeless. The companies wanted defeat and nothing else.

The companies also sought and obtained in the court session of Edinburgh an arrest of funds. The North British took action against Tait and five members of his E.C., jointly and severally, to pay £20,000 for loss sustained. The pursuers referred to the resolutions that were passed at the meetings previous to the strike, stating that a bribe was offered because the men were told that they would receive strike pay. The request was under an old Act that had hitherto been regarded as obsolete. The men anticipated the judgment by lifting all the money beforehand and paying the men, so "when they got there the cupboard was bare," and so the poor companies had none. It was said that such an arrest was hitherto unknown in labour disputes.

The "Railway Review" published a verbatim report of the Parliamentary debate in a supplement of fourteen pages. Channing's indictment extended to five columns. The resolution was seconded by John Wilson, of Mid Durham. The whole debate is a splendid piece of history, and the Tory Government then in power saw defeat facing them, to avert which they proposed the following as a substitute, if Channing would withdraw his motion: "That in the opinion of this House the employment for railway service by excessive hours is a source of danger both to themselves and the travelling public, and that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire whether, and if so in what way, the hours worked by railway servants should be restricted by legislation." It was the old dodge to avert defeat, and it succeeded. Channing, however, did not withdraw his motion, and even with the bait of a Select Committee held out by Hicks-Beach they were only saved from defeat

by seventeen votes in a good House. The Committee was appointed. It was not an inquiry that was wanted by the Government, but an evasion, and they packed the Committee. They held their first meeting on Tuesday, March 10th, which dealt with the returns of long hours that had been compiled, and the sittings continued.

The society's leaders gave evidence, also the managers of railways, and some workmen. It is inevitable, I suppose, that in any movement there are a few who would like to be traitors and some who are. One of these was Robert Collingwood, who had been an A.G.M. delegate, also an E.C. man, and who was secretary of the Tyne Dock Branch. This is a sample of his evidence:—

“Sir Joseph Pease: You are a mineral guard on the N.E.?—Yes.

“When did you enter the service?—In 1868.

“Will you read a statement of your hours for the last three months?—For the week ending March 20th, 62½ hours; March 27th, 62¾ hours; April 3rd, 69 hours; April 10th, 71¾ hours; April 17th, 71¾ hours; April 24th, 76¾ hours; May 1st, 76½ hours; May 8th, 64½ hours; May 15th, 80½ hours; May 22nd, 80½ hours; May 29th, 69¾ hours; an average for each week of 71½ hours.

“Are you satisfied with the hours you have just read?—I am perfectly satisfied, as you will see by the statement that was made by the men, and likewise by myself.

“What was that statement?—A resolution was passed on June 3rd 1891, as follows: ‘That this mass meeting of mineral guards at Tyne Dock desires to express its confidence in the company's officers who so energetically worked on our behalf respecting our hours of duty, and the improvement made has adequately satisfied us as a body.’

“How many were present?—There were forty-five out of sixty-four.

“You are a member of the Amalgamated Society?—I am.

“Do you hold office?—Yes. I am secretary of the branch.

“What is the meaning of the Darlington programme?—It is very nearly upon the same lines as the national programme; there are little alterations, but not anything much.

“What was that programme intended for?—As a calculation, or a maximum of ten hours per day.

“What are the wages now of a mineral guard?—Our wages would be 28s. per week.

“When you work overtime how are you paid?—We are paid at the same rate for overtime as we are at ordinary rate.

“Have you ever found any bad effect upon your health in working the hours you have worked?—Not the slightest.”

But this very willing witness had to admit that he worked as many as 105 hours in one week, which he considered too much. He was against a statutory limit, because he objected to State interference.

This was another gem, after having said he had altered his opinions: “You now believe in overtime?—I do.”

Benjamin Orton, a mineral guard on the N. E., was akin to him. Enoch Shipley, a driver, who was a member of the Gateshead Branch of the A.S.R.S., was of the same stamp, only that in preference to a strike he would rather an outside authority intervened, because he did not go in for strikes at all. John Butterly, an engine driver, expressed himself "as a shareholder and a driver both combined together." He was satisfied with his ninety-eight hours a week.

The Great Eastern also furnished a contingent of the ignoble army of overtime champions, though they were very modest compared with their fellow champions on the N.E. They were Ellis and Berry, drivers. Berry did not object to fourteen hours per day if not regularly or on alternate days. Ellis put in a document signed by 1,354 enginemen protesting against legislative interference. Both of them were later made loco. inspectors. That was because of their ability; not that gave evidence in favour of the company. Some of the members resented Ellis's conduct, alleging that during the Scottish strike he had been an advocate of the men on the English railway companies striking because some blacklegs had gone to Scotland, and that at a meeting he struck the table with his closed fist, spread out his arms, gesticulated, and asked "Why don't Harford call us all out?" and could not think why he did not.

Mr. W. Birt, the general manager, showed the value of the long hours return, as he admitted it was due to these that his company took action. There were others of our tribe who gave evidence against us, but the above are specimens. It was not to be expected that the members of the branches with which these were connected would take it gently. The Tyne Dock Branch passed the following resolution unanimously: "That we, the members of the Tyne Dock Branch, in meeting assembled, having read the report of the evidence given by Mr. Robert Collingwood before the Select Committee, hereby call upon him to resign his position as secretary, and consider he has misrepresented us before that body." They also appointed a successor, A. P. Forster. The Gateshead Branch, inflicted with the pestilence, also took action, with drastic measures, as far as they could. Enoch Shipley did not turn up at the meetings. The "Railway Review" put these questions, and said had he been at the meetings he might have answered them offhand: "Is it a fact that he left the North British on account of a collision and came on the North-Eastern in 1867 as a blackleg? Is it a fact that he ran off the line at Morpeth, and that five passengers were killed and seventeen injured? Is it a fact that he was fined 10s. for running too hard at the same place upon another occasion? Is it a fact that whilst in charge of a light engine he ran past the signals and collided with a train which was backing into a siding? Is it a fact that he was reduced for running into a train at York?" Another gave a column headed "Reminiscences of a Noted Renegade," concerning Collingwood. "East Anglian," the G. E. writer, also dealt with Ellis, and the chairman of the Stratford Branch proposed a resolution of censure on him at the branch, which was

defeated by an amendment moved by Tom Watson, the Organising Secretary of the A.S.R.S., who was a member of that branch.

Altogether, it was one of the liveliest periods for renegades that we have had in the history of our society. Many members were for their expulsion, but as a matter of policy the E.C. could not act upon it, because they had been protesting against the action of the Cambrian with reference to the dismissal of Stationmaster Hood, who gave evidence against that company and was dismissed on August 16th, 1891. The broad question of interfering with witnesses came before the Select Committee as a breach of the privileges of the House of Commons. The accused was allowed in the room whilst the accuser gave his evidence, so that the charges made could, if the accused wished, be known to him. Hood complained that whilst stationmaster at Montgomery he had given evidence, in consequence of which, after twenty-two years' service, twenty of which he had been stationmaster, he was dismissed. His work was well kept up, afterwards audited, and no fault was found, and he had returned to him in full his guarantee. On August 10th, three weeks after he had given evidence, he was handed by the relief clerk a letter from the secretary and manager at Oswestry, which said: "The company have no further use for your services." He was paid a month's wages. He went to see one of the directors, and that director complained that in coming to him Hood's conduct was irregular.

Mr. Conacher, the general manager, and Mr. J. F. Buckley, the chairman of the Cambrian, had to appear. The Select Committee had decided against the Cambrian, but Sir Michael Hicks-Beach wanted to stave off action against the Cambrian directors till all the other cases were disposed of, and that would have happened but for the persistency of Mr. Channing, Sir William Harcourt, Sir George Trevelyan, and others, with the result that the next day the following was agreed to: "That Mr. John William Maclure do attend this House in his place on Thursday next, and that Mr. James Frederick Buckley, Mr. William Bailey Hawkins, and Mr. John Conacher do attend this House on Thursday next at 3 o'clock."

The report of the Committee was: "That the witness John Hood was by a resolution of the directors of the Cambrian Railway Company, at a meeting held on the 6th day of August, 1891, dismissed from the service of the company mainly in consequence of charges arising out of the evidence given by him before your Committee, and laid before the directors by John Conacher, then manager of the said railway; and further, that Frederick James Buckley, John William Maclure (a Member of this House), and William Bailey Hawkins, directors of the said company, and the said John Conacher did, at a meeting at Crewe on the 30th September, held in consequence of an application by the said John Hood for the re-hearing of his case, at which the said John Hood was present, call him to account and censure him for the evidence he gave before your Committee in a manner calculated to deter other railway servants from giving evidence before your Committee.—March 24th, 1892."

On April 7th the matter was the first on the Order Paper of the House. The Speaker, after reciting the names, asked: "Is it your pleasure that these gentlemen be called in—but I have first to ask whether the hon. Member for the Stretford division of Lancashire (Maclure) is in his place." Mr. Maclure, amid ironical cheers, rose in his place. Two of the messengers then drew the bar across the House, and Buckley, Hawkins, and Conacher, accompanied by the Sergeant-at-Arms, appeared at the bar and bowed thrice. Maclure rose and tendered an apology on behalf of the culprits, saying that if they had by the course they had adopted unintentionally infringed any rules or privileges of the House he asked them to accept the fullest expression of their unqualified regret. Buckley concurred. Conybeare, M.P., asked if they were disposed to reinstate Hood, but the Speaker ruled the question out. Hicks-Beach moved the acceptance of the apology, and a very lengthy debate ensued, in which Trevelyan, Gladstone, Cremer, Howell, Fenwick, Cunningham-Grahame, and others took part. The matter stressed was that the apology was incomplete without the reinstatement of Hood. T. P. O'Connor was the most vigorous speaker on the question, thinking that the supposed apology was really an aggravation of the offence; that they meant to persevere in the offence, and meant to maintain the punishment of Hood. He proposed to add to the original motion: "That this House will not admit the said directors of the Cambrian Railways have purged their contempt until they have reinstated John Hood in the position he occupied before he gave evidence, or otherwise compensated him." The House debated the subject till just on midnight. The closure was applied by 247 to 186, and the amendment of J. Allinson Picton, which was an amended form of O'Connor's to leave out "reinstatement" and give compensation, was then voted on, and resulted as follows: For, 189; against, 245; for O'Connor's, 159; against 274. On the original motion of Hicks-Beach: For, 349; against, 70; which, considering the directors' influence in the House, may account for that 70. But before the division, when the question was put by the Speaker, there were cries of "No, no," when Dr. Tanner interjected loudly "No, no humbug." It was said to have been a sight for "the gods" to see the portly Maclure, with the others, walking backwards out of the House from the bar. Three other cases of alleged intimidation were considered by the Committee as not proven, one of which concerned Spinks, of the Great Eastern, who was dismissed after he gave evidence, the company alleging that his dismissal was because of being late and the falsification of the time book. He received the society's Protection Grant of £50, which shows how the society viewed his case.

Collingwood brought forward his case. At the commencement of the branch at Tyne Dock he had been appointed chairman, which position he held till 1887, when he was appointed secretary. He had acted as delegate and had received 12s. 6d. a day, and for other work 10s. He had attended a meeting when Mr. E. Garrity came to the branch to see if he (Collingwood) had expressed, in his evidence before

the Select Committee, the views of the branch. The membership of the branch was over 170, and at that meeting twenty-six voted for his dismissal; fifteen were neutral. He contended that the members were whipped up to attend. They threatened him with expulsion, but did not carry out their threat. He paid up his arrears in December, 1891, otherwise he would have forfeited his benefits. He drew attention to remarks from the Editorial pages of the "Railway Review" and others headed "Renegades," "Blacklegs," "Retribution," etc. One he called attention to was: "If Messrs. Collingwood and Company are at all inclined to emigrate they had better steer clear of the United States, as our esteemed correspondent there intimates that their tactics are at a discount. It is refreshing to know that in the great Republic such a deplorable exhibition of stupidity and selfishness as they displayed is almost impossible." He accused Garrity of using uncomplimentary words, and he contemplated an action for libel against the paper, and wrote the N. E. officials on the question. He also referred to the notes of one who wrote under the *nom-de-plume* of "East Anglian."

John Modral, chairman of Tyne Dock Branch, was before the Committee. He had moved that Collingwood be required to resign the secretaryship because of his evidence before the Committee, and George Story, an engine driver, had seconded it, William Hull, an engine driver, being in the chair. He dealt with all the phases of not only that meeting but other things. Both he and A. P. Forster, the new secretary of Tyne Dock Branch, dealt with the evidence that Collingwood had previously intimated he intended to give, and the evidence he actually gave not being in accord with this, and that he was elected to give evidence on the understanding they had arrived at. Some of the members had even then voted against him because they distrusted him. E. Garrity was also examined, and sought to prove that he went down to examine the books of the branch and incidentally to inquire whether the views of the branch were those of Collingwood's; and he gave an account of what had transpired at the Brighton A.G.M. in 1886, when the Scrutineers had rejected votes given in one handwriting in favour of Collingwood, and though disqualified he attended the Congress, and £5 was voted to him from the branch funds, which was shown on the balance sheet as held by the treasurer when Collingwood had spent it. Garrity went most heartily into a vindication of his own words in condemnation of the witness, and agreed even with what he had said, and approved of what the Tyne Dock Branch had done; and he gave instances where branch secretaries had been deposed. The evidence of Modral, Story, Forster, and Garrity is a bright page in the history of our society's manhood. What they did they gloried in and justified their actions. The editorial comment expressed in its leader was headed "A Huge Collapse."

These matters led Mr. W. Ellis, a member of the Stratford Branch, to try his hand at condemning those who condemned

him. His complaint was against the Editor of the "Railway Review," "East Anglian," the writer of "G. E. Notes" in that paper, and G. W. Alcock, the chairman of the Stratford Branch. He alleged that he was described by the writers as "without mental and moral stability," "an emergency man, held in abhorrence across the Channel," "discredited man," "a coward," "a fool," "untruthful," "unauthorised to give evidence," "acting from corruptive motive," etc., the "etc." covering a good deal, and "East Anglian's" notes were very largely given as contributions to the injury he had received. But the arch offender was the chairman of the Stratford Branch, whom he charged as being that writer; and how he had also in the "Railway Herald" called him a "scab." He set out in detail the letters summoning him to meetings, and how Alcock "vacated the chair, stripped himself to his shirt and showered upon me language almost unbearable; calling me a traitor to the cause of Labour and not a fit subject of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. The resolution being put for his expulsion, it was lost by four votes."

He said there were other strong speeches besides Alcock's. Alcock was called in, and defended himself, his resolution, and his branch, and the branch minute book was overhauled by the Committee. The tables were turned on Ellis. His old speeches were raked up, votes of thanks proposed by him in favour of Channing's action, and the whole history of the matter as it was dealt with by the enginemmen, and the part the company played. But the gist of the whole proceeding was, as the evidence testifies, a desire to track down "East Anglian," who had admittedly dealt in "hot stuff." After reading Ellis would say: "That is all 'East Anglian.'" The chairman of the Stratford Branch said that he had taken shorthand notes of the speeches at the meeting referred to:—

"Sir Hicks-Beach: What are you?—A signalman.

"Ellis complained to us, as you have heard, of certain references to him in the 'Railway Review.' What have you to say to that?—All those under my signature I admit.

"Do you admit both those under your signature and those signed 'East Anglian'?—I do not admit them.

"Do you deny writing them?—I have not denied anything. I do not intend to admit anything. There are about a dozen men who are accused of writing these notes, and my denial would narrow the circle, so that no man's position would be safe on the railway. Therefore, I will simply say nothing. If any man likes to think it is me, let it be upon me, and only one man will be sacrificed."

Harford was also examined. The "Railway Review" very happily put the matter of all the evidence in an article that same week under the heading of "An Object Lesson." One of the most useful functions of the Select Committee on Overwork has been the opportunity it has afforded of showing the vital difference not only between organised and unorganised workmen, but between the Trade Unionist who is

one merely by profession and the one who is such by conviction, the result of careful reflection and inquiry. The Collingwood incident brought this out clearly enough, and the evidence of Messrs. Ellis and Alcock sets out in boldest relief the same truth. Mr. Alcock nailed his colours to the mast, and the bitterest opponent of combination—and the Committee is not without them—must have felt that in comparison with the vacillating, half-hearted, and inconsistent policy of the would-be martyr Mr. Ellis he was worthy of their respect."

With regard to "East Anglian": "As the battering our esteemed correspondent was to receive, we think we can congratulate him upon his escape, and that his identity is still an object of curiosity to his enemies. Probably next week he will speak for himself." He did, in a humorous, bantering way, with a heading from the Greek tragedian, Aristophanes:—

"Follow faster, all together! search, inquire of every one;
Speak, inform us, have you seen him? Whither is the rascal run?
'Tis a point of public service that the traitor should be caught
In the act, seized, arrested, with the treaties that he bought.
"He's escaped! He's escaped!
Out upon it! Out upon it!"

"Now we must renew the search, pursuing at a steady pace,
Soon or late we shall secure him, hunted down from place to place,
Look about like eager marksmen, ready with your slings and stones.
How I long to fall upon him, the villain, and to smash his bones."

It was a subject for banter, and it was pursued at length by "East Anglian," who wrote: "Justification is writ large upon every effort of my perhaps unskilful pen, and besides, immortality is secured me, as the writings of 'East Anglian' are now to be enshrined in the archives of the British Parliament, and perhaps some old Carlyle will, a generation or two hence, come along and from the dusty records of time gather up the fragments of my not uneventful history and publish them to the world in ten volumes as 'The Life and Writings of "East Anglian."'"

The Committee gave a verdict of "Not proven" against all of us; and so only the Cambrians, in that eventful time, were adjudged guilty, and were made a laughing stock in the British Parliament. Harford's evidence was just splendid. He was calm, cool, collected, marshalled his facts, gave clear answers without hesitation and ambiguity, and unquestionably from the period of the Scottish strike right to the end of this period this was the most useful piece of work he did during his Secretaryship, the longest of any among General Secretaries.

Stratford honoured Alcock by giving his wife a tea service and some jewellery, and himself a gold medallion and silk handkerchief, and the balance in money collected only in the branch. The medallion bears the inscription: "Presented to G. W. Alcock by the members of the Stratford Branch for his services to Trade Unionism at the House of Commons, April 27th, 1892."

The Scottish trouble led to the amalgamation with the Scotch Society, and Tait and Ballantyne came over to us, but did not stay with us very long. Directly after this the country was in the throes of a General Election, and candidates were supplied with seven questions. Mr. Channing had produced a draft report for the Select Committee on Hours, which was rejected by the Committee in favour of that of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, the Chairman. The Government had evidently intended to do nothing with regard to a remedy. The seven questions had to do with ten hours for a day's work, with six days to the week, the hours to be enforced by the Board of Trade, power being obtained for Parliament to exercise effective supervision of working over all railways with qualified inspectors. Inquiries to be held in all accidents from moving vehicles, self-acting couplers, protection for platelayers, an Enginemen's Certificate Bill, Employers' Liability Bill, payment of Members of Parliament, with official expenses paid by the State, not to be confined to Labour men. The replies received were published, also a list of those candidates who were directors of railway companies. Mr. Channing had also written a pamphlet on railway overwork, its causes and remedy, so that we went to the electorate with a well-informed plan of what railwaymen wanted. The Liberals obtained a small majority, and, like the Government of 1880, they honoured their pledges and brought in two Bills, one dealing with employers' liability and the other with the hours question.

The society sought to achieve the passing of an Act of Parliament for the abolition of the doctrine of common employment, simplification of what constitutes a claim, no contracting-out, unlimited amount of claim, to abolish the six weeks' notice, so that when, as sometimes happened, results caused by the accident developed the claim could still be made. It was around contracting-out that the battle waged. It was on this question, as on the Select Committee, that the timid and capitalistic leanings of men with the narrow interest, as they thought of self-interest, stood out yet once more. In railway centres the politicians had a lively time of it. Mr. Asquith had framed his Bill with every regard for consistency, and its successful piloting through the House. He consulted Labour, and asked them to definitely state if they were against contracting-out, and they, as always, were against contracting-out, and he stood by contracting-out. The opposition were fought on their merits, and the contractors-out were beaten on their merits, and the measure passed triumphantly through all the stages of the House of Commons; but when it reached the House of Lords the Bill was knocked out by the insertion of a contracting-out clause, and so the Bill was relegated to the National dust-heap.

The other Bill dealing with the hours of railwaymen was fathered by Mr. Mundella. The society by useful amendments sought to tighten it up. As it passed the House of Commons it was made to apply to all railwaymen, and was undoubtedly an excellent measure; but here

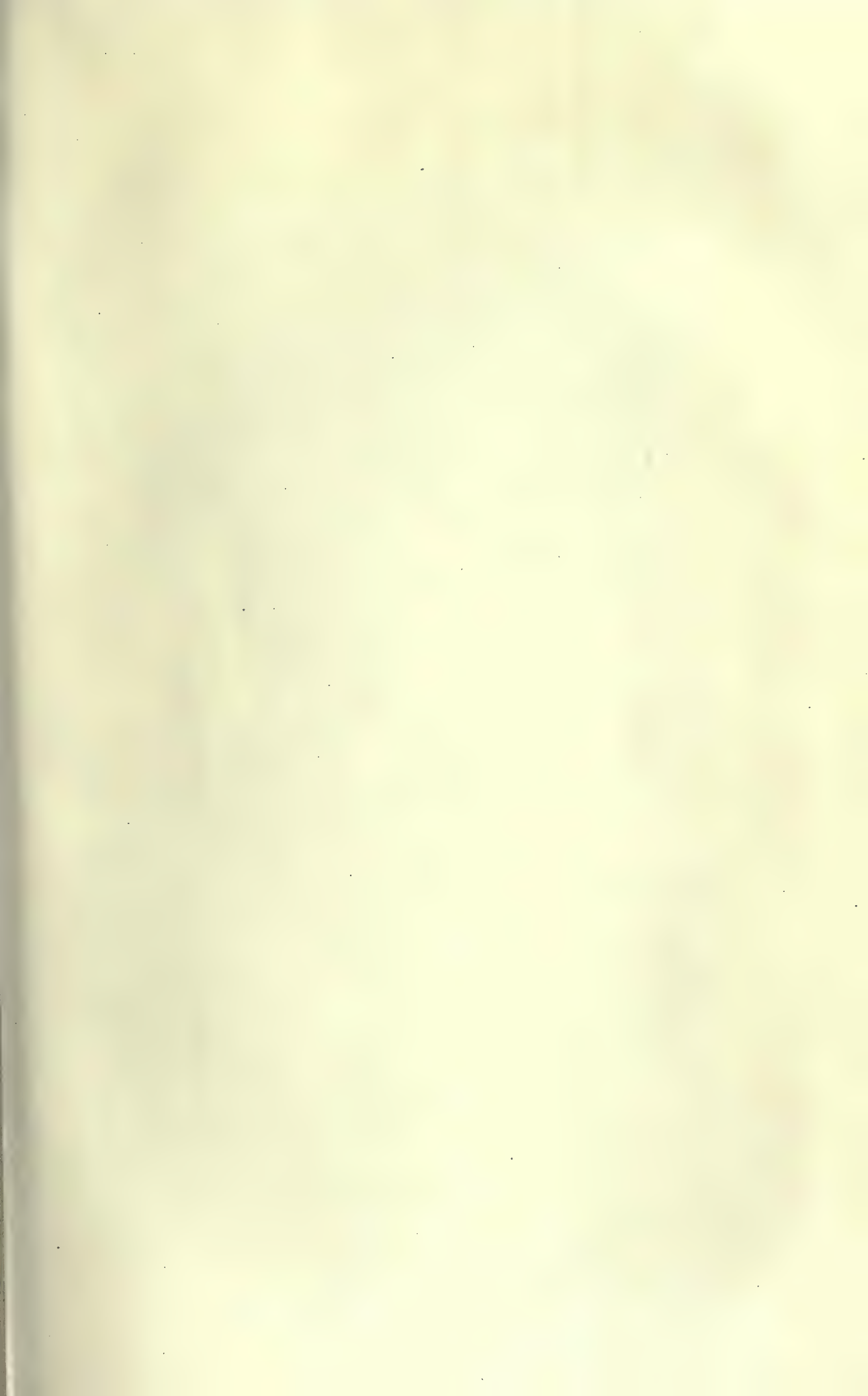
again it was emasculated by the same foes of democracy, the House of Lords. Apart from that it formed an excellent ambushade for the long-suffering in the matter of hours, though the society would have preferred the direct method of making the Board of Trade responsible; yet those who wished could lodge complaints, and had it but been used with more frequency and with courage the long hours would have been curtailed, and maybe a more stringent measure would have followed on its heels. As it was, many glaring cases of long hours were killed. Returns of hours revealed the seat of many, and the Act gave the gripping power.

Whatever failure in the Act there may have been, the greatest failure of all was the lack of courage to apply it more often. It seems folly to apply for more power when that which has been given is not used. Railwaymen were, however, by their deeds coming into line with general Labour, though they had not reached the view of an eight-hour day by legislative enactment, as the A.G.M. of 1892, which met in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London, rejected such by twelve votes to thirty-nine. It was at this Congress, on a proposal to amalgamate with the G.R.W.U., that a title was suggested by the E.C. of the A.S.R.S. that, in the event of amalgamation, the title should be "The National Railwaymen's Union." The real difficulty in accepting amalgamation was the official element, which provided for the taking over of Andrew Clark, the General Secretary of the G.R.W.U., and J. Solley, the Assistant, seeing they had but recently taken over two officials from the Scotch Society. W. Tye, of Battersea, moved amalgamation, but George Green, who had for some years been an active worker and an E.C. representative, moved the amendment that deleted the officials being taken over, and so killed the proposal, though, as one who had worked under the old title, did not like the proposed change of name.

The G.R.W.U. Congress, which met just about the same time, gave its membership as 9,983, whilst our own was 30,611, though, sad to relate, 17,000 had lapsed in two years. Not a third even of that 1892 Congress delegates is living to-day. For the first time the Congress decided in favour of Parliamentary representation.

The closing days of 1892 were marked by two deaths. On November 11th Henry Scammel died. He had been employed on the Brighton and the London and South-Western, and was a member of the Nine Elms Branch. He migrated to Ireland and was instrumental in forming the first branch in Ireland, at Belfast. He had been twice on the E.C., and he died at the comparatively youthful age of forty-three; but he had done the work of many old men.

William Foreman, of Sunderland, was younger still, being only thirty-six. "Will" was a tall, blithe, irrepressible fellow. He was the first writer of "District Notes," under the *nom-de-plume* of "Canny Man." He was exceedingly active in all that pertained to the N. E., and his work went beyond that. He became Sub-Editor of the "Railway Review" in May, 1886, and helped to lift it out of its uninspiring rut.

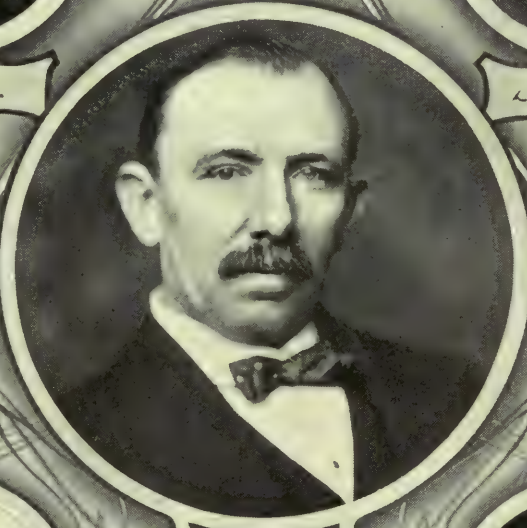




S. Chorlton.



J.E. Williams.



J.H. Thomas.



E. Garrity.



T. Lowth.

ASSISTANT SECRETARIES.

He was dismissed by Harford in 1889, but was later sent by the E.C. to organise Ireland. In addition to his organising abilities, he had the Press instinct, and used it to advantage. He was undoubtedly the foremost advocate of direct Parliamentary representation, and conducted a long controversy in the "Railway Review" with Ben Moate, of Stockton. He also wrote and published a penny pamphlet of twenty-two pages on the question of "Working Men and Politics," which reflected the views of nearly all working-class opinion of that time, and leant to the Radical side in politics. He was careful to say in his preface: "The object of this little work is to point out how it is that working men, whose lot in life is a continual struggle, lean on the Liberal side in politics. It also essays to solve the problem of the 'Conservative Working Man,' of whom much has been heard—but little seen. . . . While claiming for the Liberal Party, or, more properly speaking, the Radical Party, the support of the working classes, the duty of that party towards working men is pointed out in clear terms." In the pamphlet he speaks of the guidance needed in considering their connection with politics, and that "Their interests will naturally lie with that side of politics which will make life easier for them; that will remove burdens, smooth their rocky path, remove their disabilities, give them more freedom, extend their rights of citizenship, reduce their taxation, and in every way possible, with due regard to fair dealing, cheapen the cost of living. These are the natural conditions which mould a working man's political opinions, and which, it will be seen at a glance, accounts for them adopting the Liberal or Radical creed of politics." Then he deals with reforms that have come, and through whom they have come, shows what needs are, and in the closing words of the pamphlet: "The object of this pamphlet has been to show that working men incline by a sort of natural tendency to Radicalism." The address from which it was issued is "North Islington Liberal Club, 1889."

These extracts only go to show the position of working men then, because that was the prevailing sentiment at that time. We have gone far since then. William Foreman entered the service of the N.E. as an office boy, going through the shunting yard to goods guard. He joined the Sunderland Branch on June 6th, 1881, at 25 years of age, and it was in 1882 that he was writing his notes in the "Railway Review," so that he was soon at work. He came rapidly to the front during the period of the Darlington programme. He went to Ireland in February, 1890, and that appointment was given by the A.G.M. at Belfast in 1890. I see a note of mine in the "Review" of that time: "A north country friend of mine, in a note to me, alludes, as if I was already in possession of the news, to William Foreman's death. What feelings the intimation gave rise to! It fell like a thunderbolt upon me. I am stunned, incapable of thought. Allow me to convey to his not over-strong wife my sincere and heartfelt sympathy for the light having gone out of her home. Truly, 'In the midst of life we are in death.'" That expresses the general feeling at that time. He was

for ten years one of the most forceful personalities the A.S.R.S. had. He was an attractive personality, and notwithstanding what has been said in a previous chapter, he was held in high esteem, not to say affection, and those in intimate association loved him.

P. Stewart MacIver, who had been President of the society for many years, died April 19th, 1891, and when the question of his successor was considered it was thought by some that F. E. Channing, the Member for Northamptonshire, having done so much for railwaymen, should be his successor. So at the A.G.M. of Birmingham, 1891, the following resolution was passed: "That as the rules are silent respecting the qualifications and election of the President of the society, this meeting determines that the President of the society must be a *bona fide* member of the A.S.R.S., entitled to its privileges and benefits, and shall be elected at each Annual Meeting, and shall attend and preside at all meetings of the Executive Committee and Annual General Meetings, and shall be eligible for re-election."

The nomination of a new President in accord with the terms of the new resolution resulted in W. Hudson, of Darlington, and Mr. A. McLaren, of Liverpool, being proposed. On being put to the vote, fifty-six voted for Mr. Hudson and two against. For McLaren, one vote was given, the remainder of the delegates voting against. Mr. Hudson was therefore elected President for the ensuing year. During the time of Mr. Hudson's Presidency he was most efficient, and won the confidence and esteem of the members. This election brought the following letter from Mr. F. A. Channing:—

"Dear Mr. Harford,—I have just returned from Scotland, and have learned that the majority of the delegates have taken exactly the same view on the Presidency which you may remember I took myself when you, and I think Mr. Green, of Leicester, first intimated to me that there was a wish on the part of some of the members to nominate me for the post. I think now as I thought then, that this view is a sound one, and that it is an anachronism for the head of a great Trade Union of working men to be anyone who is not a working-man member of the society. Warmly, therefore, I reciprocate the goodwill and confidence of those delegates who wished me to lead them for a while, and I am absolutely satisfied with the result, which I accept in its simple and natural sense of one more step forward of a great combination of working men in their rightful function of working out their own salvation in their own way. That is as it should be, and, as I said last summer, it ought to be. The society will have me in the future, as it has always had, its most persistent friend in the present House of Commons. I only hope it will not put off too long the steps necessary to secure direct representation of railwaymen in the coming Parliament. They cannot have too many friends there if their objects are to be really attained.

"Yours very truly,
"F. A. CHANNING."

That same Congress hailed with satisfaction the progress of the society as outlined in the General Secretary's report, which had said : " With a society strong in membership, rich in funds, and imbued with Trade Unionism, the future for us should be a bright one, and it is the confidence of that hope that I leave the report in your hands. The position we have reached is the result of patient perseverance and much self-sacrifice, and you do well to be suspicious of those who are inclined to encourage the workers in the delusion that there is a short cut to the millennium, to use Mr. Burt's apt phrase at the Newcastle Trades Union Congress. Our social salvation must be worked out by ourselves, and through ourselves. Miracles have no place in this domain, where effects follow cause with the precision of a natural law. If men combine and organise they will succeed in improving their condition; if they remain in isolation they will fail to do so. It is the old truth, what men sow they reap, and yet thousands of our brethren on the railway persist in ignoring this simple fact. With our increased power has come greater responsibility, and the recognition of this is one of the essentials of progress. It is not too much to say that railway companies of the United Kingdom regard us as the most potent force opposed to them in resisting unfair conditions of labour, and the reason for this is not far to seek. Without arrogance or assumption we claim the premier place amongst railway societies, and this fact brings with it obligations to our fellows which it should be our duty to honourably discharge. We have now arrived at a stage when weakness or faltering in upholding the rights of railwaymen, or ill-judged action in asserting them, may partake of the character of a national disaster. This responsibility should sober our deliberations this week, just as its existence should encourage us to rise to the importance of the occasion and non-unionists to rally to our ranks. If we but bear in mind that Trade Unionism requires the subordination of the individual to the common good, and that restraint is as necessary as freedom, all will be well. Brought into existence to make public and to remedy the many evils and injustice of the service, our mission will only be at an end when overwork is abolished and starvation wages a thing of the past. If Trade Unionism means anything at all, it sets before us an ideal community in which the honest sons of toil will play a noble part. As we understand it, it seeks to raise the downtrodden, succour the weak, and comfort the fatherless, and to ensure that those who work shall be able to live human and rational lives. We strive to brighten the dull record of monotonous toil and to impart to labour its true dignity. Then let our conception of Trade Unionism be a high one, for properly understood it is none other than the cause of humanity." The signature was Harford's, but the hand that of Maddison.

For the election of E.C. for 1892, among the delegates were : R. Bell, Swansea, and P. Tevenan, Hull, who later came into prominent offices.

At the E.C. meeting of August, 1892, it was resolved, with a minority of two: "That the Protection Benefit be granted to J. Holmes, of Retford; and this Committee protests against the action of the G. N. Railway Company in victimising Bro. J. Holmes for carrying out the principles that every man has a perfect right to, namely, to carry out the instructions of this society." Holmes brought an action against the G. N. Company for wages and bonus of £6, but failed.

At the same meeting it was proposed by P. Tevenan and M. Lyons: "That the whole of the General Office printing be done by the Co-operative Printing Society in future." There voted for: J. Peters, T. Dickenson, G. Sheppard, M. Lyons, P. Tevenan, R. Bell, and M. Potter. Against: A. W. Thomas, W. Lee, W. Foot, J. Dickin, and W. Payne. Foot's vote is remarkable, because at that time he was active in forming the West London Co-operative Society, became an ardent co-operator, and was, I believe, on the Committee of the West London Society, which later amalgamated with Paddington, during the whole existence of the society till he died. Then a proposal was made that it be divided between the Co-operative Printing Society and Virtue and Company, a firm close by, in City Road. The division was against as for in the other vote, save that Lee did not vote.

When the A.G.M. met in London in 1892 Harford, referring to the past, said: "After twenty years' absence it is with peculiar pleasure that I bid you welcome to this mighty city, the centre of the nation's greatness and wealth and in which our first Congress was held. It is with mingled feelings that I look back to that gathering in the Sussex Hotel, Bouverie Street, in June 1872, when, under the Presidency of the late Dr. Baxter Langley, we made the first successful attempt to give effect to the principle of amalgamation on a comprehensive scale. It was a privilege to attend that meeting as a delegate, and a perusal of the list of delegates attending this Congress reveals the mournful fact that I am the only one who was present on that memorable occasion." He then went on to make comparisons.

It was at that meeting that Mr. S. Lazenby was elected Treasurer of the society by forty-five votes, against nineteen for Mr. Rutter, of Willesden, the previous Treasurer having been in conflict with O'Connor, of the Coal Porters' Union, which matter was dealt with by the E.C. Lazenby has remained Treasurer to the present time.

During this year and part of 1891 many attempts were made to bring about federation or amalgamation with other railway trade societies, which phases will come up in a later chapter.

Chapter XV.

OUR LITERATURE.

THE Press for the most part was a friend of railwaymen, but it could not be expected to be always at our service. We wanted an organ that would be a voice and a bond of union. On February 3rd, 1872, Mr. Bass started the "Railway Service Gazette." Its first issue, speaking of its advent, was likened to the expectant birth of a child. The parents of a paper, the proprietor and Editor, and those in authority under them have an anxious time for days and weeks before the momentous event is brought about. The name, articles, the food it will best thrive on, were among the questions thought of, but, the saints be praised, they were afflicted with no such tormenting anxieties. Alluding to their expected advent: "Those who as soon as the first twinkling star of hope appeared in the dreary firmament of overwork and small pay began to whisper of their want of a sound and healthy Press organ that they might call their own—a medium of free and fair communication between themselves and their masters, the public. It was a whisper at first, but it grew gradually louder and stronger, till it assumed a tone of demand that could no longer be neglected." It had no intention of promoting discord or limiting scope; it would be to the backbone an advocate of the rights of Labour, without casting dirt at those who hired it. Avoiding narrow prejudice on the one hand and sycophancy on the other, it would promote a friendly understanding between employer and employé. It went on: "It would be interesting to know when dawned that bright day when there awoke among railwaymen that spirit of freedom and self-reliance that now has so increased and spread as to be irresistible. A moderate and modest spirit that does not wage either sullen rebellion or violent resistance; a spirit that was not even tinctured with bitterness on account of the long-enduring injustice it was born of; a spirit that while it gave the men strength did not counsel strong measures." It also dealt with the nine-hours movement, arising out of a speech of Sir Edward Watkin, the proposed Ten Hours Bill, indicative of social changes, which were of slow growth, meetings were held at various places, and railway life was in a ferment.

A working-class paper is always a difficult thing to guide, even when the paper is run by the union itself, but when, as in this case, the parties were outside, however wishful they may be to aid, will, while it allows full freedom of discussion, bring discordant notes. There were many of these as the paper progressed, which were not very harmful, but when the organ became a partisan against the provisional

government of the society the difficulties of the leaders, always great, were intensified. Any journal working professedly for a cause must be in active touch with its leaders, must know their plans, and learn to separate things secret and avowed, what their aims are, though not publicly declared. A speech may be forgotten, but the printed word remains, and a Press blunder is not easily corrected. The Editor and proprietor, with the best intentions in the world, may publish things that should only be whispered in the ear, may fail to give the necessary lead at a critical stage, may make irretrievable blunders in utterance and policy; and those who never pretend to the dignity of thought say "I know it is so because I saw it in the papers" are the very persons who by lack of mentality may do mischief.

Langley and his provisional government would have had a much easier task if they had had control of the paper. He knew it, and said it, and advocated control, and it was only lack of funds that prevented them having an organ they could control. Edwin Phillips, with all the care in the world, could not prevent now and again stepping into the danger zone, though it must be admitted that he tried, and very largely succeeded, in keeping to the safe path, and outside his function as an Editor was an excellent peacemaker, and he deserves praise at our hands, and even help now when "the day weareth away and the shadows of the evening stretch themselves out" in his life. Outside the Editorship of that journal he did an immense amount of good work. He is still living.

Bass, who wished to serve the union, offered a share in the profits, but they never matured. The paper had its changes, missed one week of its publication, and it looked as if it would go under; but it came out in a new form and amalgamated with two other papers, but the titles of those papers as sub-titles soon disappeared. It passed into the hands of the Rev. E. Collett, of Retford, and was in his hands during one General Election, when special editions were issued for districts to aid the legislative aims of the society. From him it passed into the hands of Mr. Dixon, who ran trade journals, such as the "Grocers' Gazette." Its circulation varied from 10,000 to 12,000.

There is hardly any need to speculate as to the value of the organ in the 'seventies. It was a bond between district and district, the more so because of the widespread separation and the lack of knowledge of each others' doings. Evans used it with remarkable skill; and it saved much printing in those days when printers' bills came in and they had no money to meet them. He did all he could to promote its circulation by the issue of circulars and other methods, though he would have preferred, and said so, that an organ for railwaymen should belong to its union.

In 1880 there were issued four numbers of a newspaper for the railway service called the "King's Cross Journal," which was started by Greenwood. It was presumably Evans who advocated that it should be given a new title, to be called the "Railway Review." Its first issue

was July 16th, 1880. Greenwood was only the nominal Editor, because the hand of Evans in its pages is clear and unmistakable. Many articles, entitled "The Battle for Bread," old ones of Greenwood's dealing with the seamy side of life, into which he had made extensive dips, were afterwards published in two volumes. He was also the author of one novel entitled "Dick Temple." Evil communications may have corrupted good manners; and he partook of the language and methods of the class among whom he lived. The Editor-proprietor of a North London paper informed the present writer that "he was a good fellow, but no gentleman," a very doubtful compliment.

The paper did not pay, but here was the chance for Evans to seize and utilise a paper and achieve what he had advocated—an organ with control by himself as General Secretary. It would have the message he wished to convey without any blunders or discordant notes. So he bought it for £75, and afterwards sold it to the society for that sum. Much correspondence ensued in both papers concerning it, and for over three years the government of the society had a lively time of it.

Among the many letters concerning it the most outspoken was from W. Bell, of Edinburgh, who had written much in the "Gazette," and who later for years under the *nom de plume* of "Scotia," wrote the most brilliant series of articles, topical, didactic, and informing. "Our General Secretary," he wrote in the "Gazette," "in a very lengthened and exhaustive report to the E.C., published in your contemporary, endeavours to justify both his own action and that of the E.C. regarding the purchase of the 'Railway Review,' without consulting the various branches composing the society. There will be few, if any, in railway circles that will be prepared to doubt the ability of our General Secretary to draft out a report—whether quarterly or annual—on the highest principles of literary ingenuity. The writer is one of his most ardent admirers in that respect, but in carrying out the one principle to the letter he has altogether ignored the other, which in our eyes seems to be the more important of the two; therefore I am not surprised at the storm that has arisen over the matter." The letter nearly filled two columns.

But the thunder of these denunciations died away as the usefulness of the paper was more and more proved. Continuity, time, distinction, and usefulness have marked its career, and its Jubilee is in sight, having less than eight years to run, when it will sing with the poet, "The year of Jubilee has come." There is a difficulty in running any newspaper that has a large number of shareholders, and when there is, those in whose hands it mainly is keep the controlling interest. It is more difficult still when it is the property of hundreds of thousands, and when a large number of them think they have a right to decide what its pages shall contain or that it ought to have contributions from their more skilful pens. Every one of our Editors might, having a sense of humour, furnish many an amusing column of received and rejected contributions, in which they flash the light of truth upon what ought to be.

Evans and Harford were the nominal Editors, and Evans wrote much in it during the time of its existence while he was General Secretary. But for all practical purposes the Editors were John Graham, William Bowles, William Foreman, Fred Maddison, George J. Wardle, and the last, but not the least of his tribe, Willet Ball. Its contributors cannot all be recognised. The first to write "District Notes" was Foreman as "Canny Man," which *nom de plume* was some time after taken up by George Langlands, who had written as "Geordie." The oldest contributor is G. Alcock, who wrote in it intermittently in its early life, and contributed "East Anglian Notes" till Editorial changes came with "District Notes." From 1898 he has also contributed "Co-operative Notes" under two separate titles, and later under his own name, succeeding John Pilcher. One who wrote much under many flags was the late Bryam Kirkby, who is also the author of two books. There was a host of others: Some are dead, some of the living known to the writer, but anxious to escape immortality.

A libel case having been brought against the paper, the E.C. of December, 1900, thought it best not to have the funds of the union open to unlimited legal attack, and as doubts had been expressed about the legality of the union owning a paper—one barrister having given a decision against union ownership—it was moved by J. Taylor, of Cardiff, and seconded by J. Andrews, of Child's Hill: "That it be an instruction to at once place the 'Railway Review' in the hands of our solicitors, Messrs. Pattinson and Brewer, aided by Mr. (now Sir Edmond) Browne, barrister, if, in the opinion of our solicitors, it may be necessary." Holman and Taylor moved: "That the following members form the Consultative Committee to consult with our solicitors in drafting the articles of association to place the 'Railway Review' in a legal position: Messrs. A. Moss, G. J. Wardle, E. Garrity, J. Pilcher, G. Alcock, H. Savory, and the General Secretary." In another resolution plenary powers were given. A company was formed, which, under the motion of Pilcher, became the "King's Cross Publishing Company Limited." It was not till the time of Maddison that it was able to show a profit, but from then it has always, with the exception of the war period, paid its way.

The "Railway Herald" was an offshoot of a 6d. paper run in the interests of the companies, and started at 2d. weekly, changing to 1d. later. With this paper, more especially during Maddison's time, they were always in conflict. It was edited by a man named Brown, who it was said was the author of "Earnest Struggles," dealing with his experiences of railway life, but which is open to doubt. It may have arisen from the fact that it ran a serial in the "Railway Herald." Anyway, "Struggles," whoever he was, was a member of the A.S.R.S. in 1873. It is a book of 249 pages and purports to be "The Life of a Stationmaster. By one who has endured it." The paper ran for some years, sang its swan song, and died.

After Mr. Evans had vacated the Secretaryship he started, in 1884, a paper called the "Train." The file I have consulted is a literary

curiosity. No. 1 is of April 4th, 1884. It has a tale by the Editor, "Iron Rails and Golden Millions." "Continued from last week." For No. 1 to have a tale commencing at Chapter III. was bad enough, but in it were thanks for the reception of the paper, and also correspondence relative to a previous issue. After this there is another "No. 1" of two leaves, with edges trimmed up to print, and in Evans' handwriting—"April 4th, 1884." So also are there two No. 2's. No. 2 has only four small pages—two leaves—all dealing with gas companies. Nos. 2, 3, and 4 to 7 are all alike, except dates—all the same matter in them. May 23rd is "No. 1 New Series; No. 8, Old Series," in which "Iron Rails and Golden Millions" commences. No. 2, of May 30th, is the No. 1 of Old Series, April 4th. What doubtless happened is this. When he registered the "Train" in March and notified to the world its forthcoming appearance Harford, on April 23rd, 1884, brought out the "Mail Train" (previously announcing his intention to do so), and Evans, in order to keep legally his copyright, attached the title to some stuff he had had printed, but before No. 2 came out of the new series he found his copyright was in danger, so he took the issue of May 30th and printed on some copies "No. 1, April 4th, 1884," to circumvent Harford, who had placards: "There are trains and trains, but this is the 'Mail Train.'"

This paper was issued a day before the "Railway Review," and was that paper, with small exceptions. It was brought out to kill the "Train," and the E.C. of that period paid Harford £40 for his losses. I have carefully read the whole issues of the "Train," and a paper fairer to the A.S.R.S. was never issued. Not once did he display any feeling against it; once only does he step aside to notice this guerilla warfare and dip his pen in gall, and did that justifiably. In a series of articles on "Trade Unionism on the Railways" he shows how the A.S.R.S. alone took the right position to Labour. He never countenanced any attacks on its government; indeed, in one case he appended a note that he had always advocated that these were internal affairs to be decided by the society itself. That was attached to a correspondent's letter signed "Accringtonian," who was E. Garrity. Other prominent men also wrote letters, such as "Clapham Junction Secretary," namely, Mr. J. Pilcher, who was arraigned for such before the 1885 A.G.M. at Leicester; "Liverpool No. 1" (A. McLaren); "Geordie" (G. Langlands, Newcastle); but they received no outward Editorial encouragement. Later the paper came out fortnightly, finally monthly, becoming at the end a commercial travellers' paper, and died January 27th, 1886, with an advertisement in its last issue for turning it into a company, with a promise of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Harford's "Mail Train" did the same, following the same course, and after being published monthly died May 1st, 1887, when it should fittingly have died April 1st. Other papers flitted across the railway stage. The General Railway Workers' Union themselves started the "Railway Express," an eight-page quarto sheet, price $\frac{1}{2}$ d., at the time of the Scotch strike, which had a short existence. The first and succeeding issues are in my possession. It was not a very vigorous organ.

The "Railway Worker," a monthly paper, which started October, 1909, was a much better paper, was well edited, and had the right ring about it. It was run by some members of the G.R.W.U. It had a short life. Wigzeli, whilst in Ireland, started a paper called the "New Way," which developed into the "Irish Railway Review," and which lifted the articles from its namesake, and action had to be taken.

The following is a piece of secret history which explains the "Mail Train" business. The resolutions were passed at the E.C., February, 1884, but not printed in the published minutes. As the grants mentioned do not appear in the report it is presumed the receipts were less by that amount:—

On the motion of Birmingham (W. Sabin), it was resolved: "That a sum of £80 be voted to the General Secretary for services rendered in connection with prize draw."

On the motion of Edinburgh (W. Bell) and Sunderland (W. Foreman), it was resolved: "That we grant our General Secretary an additional sum of £50 for his noble sacrifices on behalf of the society's Orphan Fund drawing."

On the motion of Birmingham and Bristol (J. Higginbottom): "That the bill presented by the Assistant Secretary, amounting to £53, for overtime in connection with the prize draw be paid."

On the motion of Birmingham and Cardiff (T. Parry), it was resolved: "That this Committee do not proceed with the publication of the 'Mail Train' newspaper."

On the motion of Preston (G. Watson), it was resolved: "That the cost of the production of the 'Mail Train' for the past three weeks be paid from the 'Railway Review' account."

Then at the bottom—the writing is Tom Watson's—there is in shorthand: "This amounted to £43 16s. 11d."

OUR VARIOUS HEADQUARTERS AND UNITY HOUSE.

All are architects of Fate,
Working in these walls of Time;
Some with massive deeds and great,
Some with ornaments of rhyme.
Nothing useless is, or low;
Each thing in its place is best;
And what seems but idle show
Strengthens and supports the rest.
For the structure that we raise,
Time is with materials filled;
Our to-days and yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build.
Build to-day, then, strong and sure,
With a firm and ample base:
And ascending and secure
Shall to-morrow find its place.

—Longfellow.

The buildings we have formerly occupied, and are now occupying, are in themselves a reflex of our progress and increasing activities, and this history will not be complete without a brief survey.

Our first Registered Office, 308, New Cross Road, S.E., was the private dwelling-place of Mr. Chapman, the society's first secretary, the E.C. holding their meetings in the first few months at the Winchester Arms, Southwark Bridge Road, which still exists, but the then 308, New Cross Road, has been displaced by the Deptford Town Hall. The first business office was 25, Finsbury Square, E.C. These rooms being small, inconvenient, and expensive, we moved to 306, City Road, which was for some years our habitation and home. Our next building, 55, Colebrooke Row, was a fair size, which we vacated for other reasons than spaciousness. Our next venture comprised four box-like rooms at the Club and Institute Union, Clerkenwell Road, E.C., adjoining the then Holborn Town Hall. How we conducted our business in the small space at our command remains to this day a mystery. A photographic picture of an E.C. sitting of that time would show a marvel of compactness. To get from one end room to the other end room necessitated going through Mr. Harford's or Mr. Maddison's room, which occupied the centre, and to do that the occupant had to shift his chair. It was either that or going down to the bottom of the building and coming up by the staircase on the opposite side. We held on to these rooms because of the associative aspect of their owners.

When we fitted up 72, Acton Street for our occupation we reasonably thought we had found a permanent home. We were, however, soon reminded that we were not sufficiently far-sighted. We had as tenants there the conductors of the "Review," but they had to "flit," and even then our Scrutineers and others had to work in an undesirable basement. Altogether we were "cribbed, cabined, and confined," nor were the surroundings of the most healthy nature, and the most easy-going Medical Officer of Health, had he been invited to approve or condemn, would most certainly have deemed the rooms as having insufficient cubic space, whilst the workers within had to shift to and fro as necessity demanded. The Executive therefore determined to look ahead to calculate the growing numbers, usefulness, and varied activities of the society, and build both in spaciousness and durability for the future, if not for all time. So, after many fruitless attempts, caused by the land hunger in London, we found the properties facing Euston Road and Gower Place in the market and bought them. After occupying the needed space, it left 193, Euston Road standing, and property in Gower Place, and on the right a large space, the houses on which we demolished. I append a description of the property:—

Site.—The site of the offices was formerly occupied by dwelling houses Nos. 193, 195, 197, Euston Road, and Nos. 39-41, Gower Place.

The frontage of the offices in Euston Road was 57ft., and the frontage in Gower Place 49ft. The depth all over between these two

frontages is 99ft. The mean superficial area covered by the offices is, therefore, 4,462ft. In addition to this, the Euston Road forecourt measures 44ft. superficial, and the Euston Road and Gower Place areas amount together to 534 superficial feet.

Externally.—The external walls of the offices—front, back, and flanks—with their foundations, were built to carry an additional storey, should it be required, and the roof of the offices was formed as a flat to enable this to be done without structural difficulty.

Elevations.—The Euston Road elevation from ground level was erected with polished Cornish granite up to string course, and from string course to top of pediment also with Cornish granite, but fine-axed. The walls below ground level are faced with buff-glazed bricks, and the dressings to door and window openings are in Portland stone.

The Gower Place elevation above footway is in red brick, with Portland stone dressings to all openings, and in like material are the string courses, cornices, pediment, etc. The walls below footway are faced with white glazed bricks, and the dressings to window and door openings in Portland stone.

Flanks.—The flanks of offices overlooking the yards of adjoining properties are faced the whole height, viz., from ground level to under-side of coping, with best white glazed bricks, and the jambs, heads, sills, mullions, and transomes of window openings are in Portland stone.

Forecourt and Area.—The Euston Road forecourt, screen walls, and piers and dwarf walls abutting on footway are in fine-axed Cornish granite, and a like material is used for balustrade to area. Heavy wrought-iron fencing and folding gates enclose forecourt from footway.

The steps to front entrance, and wing walls and piers of balustrade are polished Cornish granite.

Gower Place Area.—Stone curbs surmounted with wrought-iron fence, with gates to entrance and gate to stone steps, enclose Gower Place area.

INTERNALLY.

Floors and Roof.—The floors to the several storeys and the flat forming the roof are constructed of fire-proof material throughout, and are absolutely fire-proof and are ventilated.

Staircases and Landings.—The staircases and landings are in ferro-concrete, and are constructed in the recess formed by the difference in width of Euston Road and Gower Place frontages.

The treads, risers, and strings of staircases are in marble throughout.

Corridors, Floors, and Lavatories.—The corridors (except in basement) are covered with marble tiles, and the lavatories with black and white ceramic tiles.

Floors Generally.—The floor coverings of the Euston Road offices (except basement) are oak blocks, and Gower Place offices are in pitch-pine and maple, and pitch-pine and maple in basement.

Parquetry Flooring.—The board-room, Parliamentary Secretary's and Industrial Secretary's rooms are laid with parquetry flooring in wainscot oak and walnut.

Joinery.—The joinery to Euston Road offices is in wainscot oak. The walls of board-room, Parliamentary Secretary's and Industrial Secretary's room, and the walls of General Office are panelled two-thirds their height, the other offices being panelled one-third their height.

The building was erected with the best materials, and by skilled and experienced Trade Union men.

Of the adaptability of the various rooms for the purposes intended the Building Committee had no doubt whatever. Carefulness, down to the minutest details, has been a feature of its work. For every particle of work the stipulation was that Trade Union workmen and conditions should prevail, which, to the best of their knowledge and belief, was observed.

The Building Committee consisted of Mr. Bell, who was then General Secretary, but resigned that office while the building was in progress, remaining a member of the Committee; Mr. E. J. Williams, then Assistant General Secretary, but who was elected General Secretary during the building, Mr. E. Charles, President; of the E.C., Mr. R. Bebbington (of Manchester), who was chairman of the Committee; Mr. J. Brodie (of Percy Main); Mr. Garton (Hull); Mr. G. Layton (Leeds); Mr. J. Mitchell (Paddington); and the Trustees of the society, Messrs. G. W. Alcock, J. Pilcher, and P. Hewlett. Architect, J. Newcombe.

It was at the E.C. sitting December, 1908, the decision of new offices was arrived at. The site was purchased February, 1909. The Committee comparing the building's durability with that of human life know that it, like the society—

“Will live.”

Whilst those who called it forth are but a name.”

Their names are to be found on a tablet in the hall of the main entrance. When it was erected it was ample for all needs, but when the National Health Insurance Act came into being and we set up an “approved” section, the union growing in the meantime, again we were cramped. Plans were prepared but abandoned in order to utilise 193, Euston Road, and the two houses at the back of Gower Place and the vacant space at the side were advertised for sale, and one of the bodies that sought to house itself on it was the Ancient Order of Foresters. During 1920 the E.C. decided to extend Unity House, utilising that site. Almost synchronising with this was an offer to purchase the property on the left of us, which we accepted, and sold to the people concerned for the price we gave for it, plus 12½ per cent. When the decision was made to build it, we found that we should have to set back the proposed wing 10ft. the whole yard space of the

two rows of houses in Euston Road and Gower Place, so a purchase was made on either side in order to make the wall straight and obviate paying a high price for that revered Act of the property-owner which provides for compensation for easement, called "Ancient Lights." Before the building was completed unemployment set in, the need for more space diminished, and a Special General Meeting relegated to the E.C. the desirability of letting a portion, the lease not to exceed five years. The approved section occupies the upper floor, and the other part is awaiting occupants, till such time as railwaymen shall have one union for all, when the entire building will be needed. The architects for the new wing were Bond and Cockerill, 205, Euston Road.

UNITY HOUSE AND ART.

There seems to be an intangible something about "Unity House" which has an attraction alike for the journalist, statesman, Trade Union leaders, and artist. Why? I presume because it is a symbol of the spirit of the age. We can pass over the painting of "Dog Help" and the stuffed figure of the dog, which is both a symbol of charity and the heart that feels for the widow and orphan, because the dog was ours, but we are in another sphere with "Labour Awakening," by Mr. Chitty. No more fitting place could be found for it, and the inspiration for its destination by Mr. Chancellor was only one of the many inspirations of his life, because every good cause has found in him a ready exponent when it lay within the range of his sympathies and ability. He is an earnest disciple of Randall Cremer in International Arbitration, as he was for a short time his successor in the representation of Haggerston, Cremer's constituency.

The unsuspecting stranger might think that the Board-room of the Executive at Unity House was an art gallery, with the photos of its Presidents and the paintings that hang on its walls by Felix Moscheles. The painter of these was more than an artist—he was a man. Wide in his sympathies with every form of human suffering, he gave always with a free, if not too free, hand. He hated war with an intense hatred, and worked his whole life, where he could, passionately for peace. He was more than a painter of pictures, he was an artist in thought and pen pictures. He seemed to cover all life. Music, art, life, all forms of it, were within the scope of his wide sympathies. His father was a noted musician and the intimate friend of Felix Mendelssohn. His mother wrote a life of her husband, and in the copy of the painting of his mother she has the most beautiful face that I ever saw shine from old age, and the painter of our pictures in Unity House translated the letters of Felix Mendelssohn to his parents, which was published in Boston, U.S.A., because the world was the country of Moscheles. If my readers want to see an artist in words as well as in paintings he should read his "Fragments of an Autobiography," in which are the most beautiful pen pictures that I ever read. Every chapter commences the same: "I well remember." I have read with avidity all Mazzini wrote, or descriptions of him, that I could lay my hands upon, but in

this "Fragment" he gives the best description of him I ever read. I here transcribe a small portion :—

"If he was grand in his wrath, he was grand also in his ideal aspirations; whether he thundered with the withering eloquence of a Cicero, or pleaded for the brotherhood of man with the accents of love; whether he bowed his head humbly before the power of one great God, or rose fanatically to preach the new gospel, 'Dio e il popolo,' God the first cause, the people sole legitimate interpreter of His law of eternal progress. The conviction that spoke from that man's lips was so intense that it kindled conviction; his soul so stirred that one's soul could not but vibrate responsively. . . . His eyes sparkled as he spoke and reflected the ever-glowing and illuminating fire within; he held you magnetically. He would penetrate into some innermost recess of your conscience, and kindle a spark where all had been darkness. Whilst under the influence of that eye, that voice, you felt as if you could leave father and mother and follow him, the elect of Providence, who had come to overthrow the whole wretched fabric of falsehoods holding mankind in bondage. He gave you eyes to see and ears to hear, and you were stirred to rise and go forth to propagate the new gospel, 'The Duties of Man.'"

He offered to Italy, through the Italian Ambassador, the picture he painted of Mazzini, but he was politely bowed out, and naively adds: "The picture has gone through one or two similar experiences. What will become of it eventually I do not know." This of one who passionately believed in "God and humanity."

Chapter XVI.

EDWARD HARFORD'S WORK AND SAD END.

SEVERAL distinctive features stand out in the society's records in the last decade of the last century, not the least being the successful efforts to make more perfect the machinery of railway life in order to reduce its blood tax by lessening the dangers to life and limb and to make for more efficiency in that direction by limiting the hours of toil. Each operated upon the other, public opinion and other circumstances hastening the good work. Present-day minds, born into the new conditions, cannot appreciate the good work the society did in those days, because they are strangers to what others had to endure. They are using the more perfect instrument the older and dead members forged. It is a debt they owe to pioneer effort and financial toll. There was not a danger mingling with the work of any grade but that protective hands were stretched out and brought back spoil in the face of resistance from the companies, inaction of their own class, and the tardy movements of the Parliamentary machine. With meagre talent and much energy they triumphed over all. Present-day railwaymen have entered into the heritage of the labours of those who lived before them when no man was sure of his railway life. The reformers went on, and Acts of Parliament for compensation, Truck Acts, and Regulation Acts grew in number and wider in effect, and evil after evil was slain. Trade Union action was not confined to hours and wages: it covered all life.

Surveying the field now, nothing seems to have been left which invention and other things made ready for use but that it was thrust forward and urged. Side by side with that went the hours question, though it was sometimes hard to convince the less educated that the hours question was the key to the wages one. Diminution of the one meant the increase of the other. It was only when concurrently with hours going down and wages going up that convincing proof was given of the reformers' faith, because wages were never so low as when hours were high, and the achievements in both were many and wide.

During this decade also the society's records show how the Protection Grants were mounting up, an outward and visible sign that work was being done and that cowardice was finding repentance in courage and becoming the heritage of many. Regarding work, it showed danger. They did the work, guarded against and resisted the danger. One company above all others, at the head of which was aristocratic and autocratic conceit, flung their arms wide, because the workers questioned

the right of serfdom, and the company sought to stem the rising tide of Labour. Instead, they helped its flow. The very tyranny of their deeds made for thought and increased activity. Defiance and courage joined hands, and that company—the G. E.—now stands pre-eminent in recognition and goodwill. There can never be perfection because it has always a vista.

At that time on that railway never a speaker dared stand upon a platform to speak, and even when he did find a lisping voice the name was withheld. But voices grew, courage was born, and names came with utterances. They openly opposed officialism, denied with voice and pen their alleged facts. When prudence directed secrecy they were secret; when the cause demanded danger and openness they came into the open and took the heritage of seeming rashness. And so it became that never a railway was there wanting a champion who had ability and courage, and many an arrow shot into the air found its bed. So that the increasing grants were a sign of something attempted something done. No reformer's work is easy; he must have both combativeness and hope, and may even then see his mental architecture sometimes laid in ruins. So it is little wonder that many fell by the wayside. It was submission or death; and they chose death. They were then doing what dear old John Graham had urged as early as 1871, and their acts became contagious. So efforts grew and harvests were reaped.

Nor did the A.S.R.S. confine its gifts and sympathies to its own. Hitherto it had looked upon its own little plot and thought it the universe. It had limited itself to self and railways; now actions widened, gifts without stinginess were made, and if there was a fault it went beyond reason, and the heart and brain left company. The book-binders, the sailors, the dockers, and many others took of our growing capital. The £5,000 to the Scotch Society might have had a tinge of selfishness in it, as many of our men were involved. But that could not be said of some others. The Hull dockers received £1,000. We gave too much, and gave it too often. As an illustration of this increase in applications for Protection Grant we have at this point only one of many of Harford's reports. In his first report to the E.C. of 1891: Joe Peters, of Edge Hill, dismissed by the L. & N. W.; Fred Pearce, dismissed by the Rhymney; and David Vaughan, of Cardiff. Some little incident which sooner or later happens in railway life, unless extraordinary good fortune attends, is used for reason of dismissal. Concerning the offence of the last named the loco. superintendent said: "If it had happened six months earlier it might have been overlooked, but you shouted as loud as anyone a short time ago—(referring to the strike)—and have made a whip for your own back." Colwick Junction, Portobello, West Hartlepool, Leeds No. 1, and Watford are all on one page of Harford's report of claims; and the pages grew.

If the words of a to-be martyr were true, "That the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church," it was true of Trade Unionism

on railways. It made it. That is seen in the opening words of Harford's report. They were: "The influx of members has been larger since the A.G.M. than at any other similar period of the society's existence, and several thousands have been added to our ranks." There is a true Trade Union ring in both this and the dismissals, because tyranny never goes out without mad resistance, which is the expiring groan of efforts to impose bondage when men seek to break bonds. At the same time, when one was struck the locals, impressed with the worth of the one shot, often asked that he be appointed organiser and turned adrift on the system. They knew his worth, even if they could not see that local ambition must be subordinate to general need and finance.

So also at almost every E.C. and A.G.M. there were proposals for amalgamation or federation with other organisations, the very aspirations of which exhibit the wish for the strength that comes through solidarity. The proposals nearly always came from the A.S.R.S., showing the wider vision of its members beyond others. And when the overtures were considered and the replies made the rejection was only because of the impracticability of the reply.

Growing, too, was the political conception, though not divorced from Radicalism, and even when independence was first mooted it was only a cover to rope in opposing thought. In 1892 they had advanced to this: "On the motion of Leicester and Tebay it was resolved: 'That the time has now arrived when the A.S.R.S. should be directly represented in Parliament by the General Secretary, who shall be independent of either political parties; and when engaged at the House his duties at the General Office shall be performed by the Assistant Secretary, and additional temporary assistance engaged if necessary, the election expenses to be paid from the funds of the society, assisted by voluntary subscriptions.'" What an old-world charm there is in that "now arrived," and how careful they were in engaging assistance to cook the hare before she was caught; but it was another new beginning, and beginnings make endings out of further effort.

The first invitation came from the South Islington Liberal Association, which was turned down because it was a very meagre railway constituency, as was that from Blackburn. Four years later a cry came from Northampton. Harford sallied forth with Sydney Buxton's political handbook in his pocket to fight a constituency that had a passionate love for freedom, as in the Bradlaugh case, as London had for the shady reformer Wilkes. Harford was beaten. The fact is, he was never cut out for a politician; but even then but for the plethora of candidates he might have won. The names and result were as follows:—

Labouchere (L.)	4,884
Druker (C.)	3,820
Harford (L.)	3,703
Jacob Jacobs (C.)	3,394
F. G. Jones (S.)	1,216
J. M. Robertson (I.)	1,131

We had to wait till a surer call came from Derby, which has more than one starting-point in our history beyond that supplied by Bass. "We are growing," said Harford, and we have been growing ever since. We were multiplying the seed sown, and operations were intensive as well as extensive. Labour was standing upon its feet, cultivating reason, increasing strength, widening its vision, recognising that where there is no vision the people perish, and they intended to live. Political activity manifested itself in the General Election of 1892, when the worst of our foes of the Select Committee on Overwork bit the dust, among whom were: T. Milvain, Sir Henry Tyler, and T. Murdoch, whilst Labour increased its Members to eighteen.

Another sign of increased strength, though we were not strong enough to wrestle with it, was the constant refusal of leave of absence for the delegates to attend to society business. The companies urged as a reason the exigencies of the service, as if the working of a railway depended upon one man. During February, 1891, E.C. meeting only Bradshaw, of Newport, was absent, but the next day there were George Green, of Leicester, G. A. Henderson, of Shildon, Slavin, of Dublin, Fishlock, of Wolverhampton No. 1; and McLaren was absent part of the time. The N. E. even denied it to the President, Walter Hudson, but the A.G.M. elected him with a shout of defiance. It meant more than the companies throwing sleepers across the track: it meant for the society the probability of wrong judgments through absentees. The more enlightened companies came, gradually perhaps, to see that it was better that their men should fill their elected part, because responsible acts give stability. The citations made indicate growth and extending influence, and during 1892 we grew in a triple sense in influence, extended membership, and mounting finance.

Early in 1893 the conduct of Mr. Tait, who came over with the Scotch Society, had been unsatisfactory on the Labour Commission and in other ways, and he asked leave to resign and was accorded the privilege. This, with the death of W. Foreman, left two offices vacant. For these vacancies there were twelve candidates, only four of whom obtained an E.C. vote: A. Mear, five; P. Tevenan, four; R. Bell, two; Hewitt, one. In the second vote Tevenan received six and Mear five. Tevenan was elected for the Irish Secretaryship. For the vacant Organiser, Bell received ten votes, McLaren two, and Hewitt one; Bell was then unanimously elected.

Tevenan had come into prominence at the beginning of the Darlington movement, and was a delegate to the A.G.M. of 1889, and later an E.C. man. R. Bell had been the secretary of the Swansea Branch, and because of his Trade Union activities was sent by his company to Carn Brae, in Cornwall, an out-of-the-way place, but the irony of the situation was that he afterwards went down and opened a branch there. The seed he had planted had grown.

The national movement at this time began to split itself into grade movements, and the E.C. so far from discouraging sanctioned them; not all at once, but in successive stages, movement after movement.

The ablest-worked one, however, was that of the signalmen's. To make a programme for that grade the E.C. gave its representatives one day. Harford invited proposals, and they met at Derby on July 27th and beat out a programme with real business instinct. Hudson was President, and John Dobson and Richard Bell were present. The meeting was held in the Co-operative Hall. As if for a silent exhortation, over the platform was the quotation from Milton's "Areopagitica": "In things essential, unity; in things doubtful, liberty; in all things, charity." Underneath, modelled in gold, was a bundle of sticks being bound together by strong hands.

Before me is the programme, with its decisions marked. Among those delegates were some of the old stalwarts of that time: Jim Holmes, Sam Lazenby, Alfred Moss, Pulford, of Mirfield, and many others who have furnished many a bright page to A.S.R.S. history. Most of them are dead. One little chap, who bore the familiar name of Dobson, was a signalman at Cramlington. Dobson and Moss are dead; both were brilliant. The business aspect of beating out the programme was carried out with ardour, and they seem to have neglected no opportunity to carry it out. Large meetings were held in various towns and in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London. They waited upon Ritchie, the President of the Board of Trade, with regard to the hours question, the deputation being introduced by Mr. Channing. The speakers, each with a portion of the question allotted them, were: Lazenby, Pulford, Shaw, Smyth, Mowforth, Fitzgerald, Whitby, Mitchell, Stuffins, Bishop, Davies, Taylor, and Neish. The interview was published in a sixteen-page pamphlet. They worked on for years and did good work, though, as was expected, the last sheaf was not garnered. It unfortunately set the pace for grade movements, and during 1897 others were held by the locomen, platelayers, carmen, parcel men, and, indeed, the whole national movement resolved itself into various grade movements and assisted in killing all, so that by the end of the Harford regime the national movement was gone. They even held a conference of national committees and another for revising national programmes—note the plural—and the whole host of them were snuffed out, some by dissension, and others by senile decay, the tokens of which were seen in Harford's report to the E.C., March, 1895. At that same E.C. the following was stated: "A matter of some concern to the society is the attitude assumed by the directors of the Great Eastern Railway towards their employés. Their open hostility against free combination is rampant, as is evidenced by the dismissals of members of this and other societies who were known to be active workers in the cause of Trade Unionism. The expressions made use of by the chairman at the last half-yearly meeting of shareholders of resentment at the interference of the Board of Trade on behalf of its overworked signalmen and others, and the threat to dispense with the services of a large number of men by reducing the train service and so inconveniencing the public, displays a domineering spirit which sooner or later will have to be curbed. It is reported that the above-mentioned threat was given effect to by 500 men being discharged on the 4th February."

This "curbing" sentence was strong for Harford, but as a matter of fact it was not the "Railway Review" alone and its Great Eastern writer that were handling his lordship roughly, but various other journals. The chairman was Lord Claud John Hamilton, who succeeded Mr. Parkes in the chair of that company. His lordship could brook no interference of any outside agency, whether by the Board of Trade or a Trade Union, and every one who did so intervene was anathema. Spinks, a signalman at Custom House, was the first active Trade Unionist to be dismissed. Then just after the men came into the branches at as many as a hundred at a time—at one branch meeting. The men were urging the railway regulation in the matter of hours and in various other ways. Things were lively on that railway.

This was from the Great Eastern writer in our journal in July, 1894 : "The large influx of locomen into our society lately points to restlessness in that department. There is a large quantity of combustible material which needs only a spark to cause ignition, and the officials are going the right way to supply it." The next week furnished other material. A driver named Quinney, because he had taken up the cause of his fellows, was ordered to leave Cambridge for Peterborough. The same writer the following week said : "The spirit of revolt is abroad, and the Cambridge incident promises to be the most exciting one of modern times. There is no need for me to sound the tocsin, to call out 'War, war!' I shall have to bestride the elements, take an impartial survey, and tell the men to trust in God and keep their powder dry. We are in for a battle; vital principles are at stake; a blow has been struck at liberty; the boasted freedom of G. E. employés is a species of bastardy, and all that is sacred in workmen's causes is struck by it."

They wanted to shift Quinney because he was the representative of the men. All the correspondence in the case was published, and it showed the G. E. up very badly. Enthusiastic meetings were held, and it looked at one time as if it must come to blows. But those within the movement knew that it was not a time for striking, and so they encouraged protest meetings as a means of letting off steam, to prevent the greater calamity of a strike. Though the men were better organised than in any period of their history, new members coming in rapidly; yet these were fledglings and of an unreliable quality. So they thought it better to show their appreciation of Quinney and their detestation of G. E. methods by making a collection for Quinney, which in a very short time reached over £110, in addition to which he received the Protection Grant. The correspondence that passed between Archibald Grove, M.P. for West Ham, and Lord Claud Hamilton, in addition to that between the parties, received a good Press hearing, and uncomplimentary epithets were hurled at the head of his lordship. Even before that presentation was made the company dismissed another servant, Alderman Athey, of the West Ham Council. He was in the works department, a capable speaker and the recognised spokesman of the works. The company at that time paid for the time lost by some

of their employ es who were on the Council, but Athey was not paid. Athey, Alcock, and another named Bignell, had, during the agitation against contracting-out, spoken and written boldly against the proposal, and time after time both Athey and Alcock were called up to Liverpool Street; but every time they were called up Alcock wrote a long letter in the local Press giving the facts of the interview and reiterating the charges made, till by sheer force of weariness the company dropped the matter. It was for this and being the men's leader that Athey was discharged. The men in the works presented Athey with an illuminated address for his work on their behalf, but such was the cowardice in the works that the parties presenting it dared not put their signatures to it. It hangs in his front room, without the names of the donors, to their dishonour.

The next victim was Arthur Bignell, another man in the works, who was often to be found on the platform urging men's claims. He was a member of the West Ham School Board. The blows were being struck at men on local bodies. It seemed as if they resented their workmen being on public bodies, and claimed dominion over not only their spare time, but over their souls and bodies.

The next month found yet another victim in G. W. Alcock, a Trustee of the union. He had been harassed by the officials so much that the E.C. had asked him to continue to pursue his work with his usual prudence and care; and he did. But a stationmaster at Ilford had been libelled in the "Railway Review," the paper being led astray by one whom they thought reliable, and it was thought better to admit frankly the error into which they had been led, and did so, and the apology was signed by the three Trustees of the society, who were nominally, as custodians of the society's property, the proprietors of the paper. They thereupon dismissed Alcock. Such was the urgency of the case that Mr. C. Randall, district superintendent, was sent to his station at Hackney Downs to give him a week's notice to leave the service. Nothing was said about working the time out; but he found the South Junction box manned when he entered the next morning at 4 am. That raised still more indignation against the company. But again the men showed their opinion of the G. E. tactics by presenting him with about £170, in addition to the Protection Grant.

The three men mentioned were on public bodies, and just about the time of their dismissal they were re-elected. The company then issued a notice that all employ es who sought admission to local bodies were first to obtain the consent of the company. Some ignored it, and the company probably did not know of it. Others, like Osborne—he of the Osborne judgment—told them he was elected; but one, Fred Unwin, a signalman at Shadwell, refused to acknowledge in any way their right to dictate to him what he should or should not do, and because of that he was dismissed. Unwin, with others, had just previously broken down on iniquitous system the company had when dealing with the men elected to appear at Liverpool Street as a deputation. The company sprinkled these deputations, with other men of their choice,

either carefully picked or chosen by ballot, which time after time led to a betrayal of the men's cause. Those elected had instructions; those whom the company chose were non-unionists, and as a consequence there was confusion, which was the aim of the company. The men considered it was time this was broken down, so when they went as a deputation and found the others there they absolutely refused to have anything to do with the business, which nonplussed the officials. A threat was made of a strike, and the company, fearing it, erected some huts barbed around with wire on a large space they had at Chadwell Heath to protect the "loyalists" and "blacklegs," which made the company a laughing-stock.

The papers took up the case, and the "Times" and the "Daily Chronicle" made a special feature of the case, and the whole public Press were unanimous against the company, and the arguments and ridicule that were heaped upon them broke down the abominable system. So Unwin and Lusty, with others, achieved a triumph, but they were laid wait for, and this election of Unwin to the Poplar Borough Council was the reason assigned for his dismissal—he had not asked authority. Again an appeal was made for Unwin, and this time it was directed to representatives on public bodies and Members of Parliament, to journalists and others; and these were the ones who financed him. It may interest our members to know Felix Moscheles the painter of the pictures that hang in the board-room of the N.U.R., was one of the contributors. He was a passionate lover of freedom. The circular that was issued with the appeal put the bald facts of the case. They were sent out by the sackful. And so for the second time—this time as a martyr—Unwin won a triumph for G. E. men. The subscriptions reached nearly £100. It did more; it stayed the dismissals. He and a man named Jeffery were the last two, without we put Ambrose in at a later stage; but then he called his lordship a liar, when he ought to have used some more euphemistic phrase, say, "terminological inexactitude."

Dismissals were not confined to the A.S.R.S. men alone. They extended to the G.R.W.U.; and Athey was a member of both. It was sheer publicity that broke down G. E. tyranny, and I should hardly suppose that the company is proud of that part of its history. The Unwin matter was carried into the time of Mr. Bell's Secretaryship.

We must now take a brief disjointed view of the decade from 1900 to the period which ended with Harford's services. The Scotch strike failing in immediate aspect was the best asset to organisation that the A.S.R.S. ever had. The members of our society who were victimised by reduction received Protection Grants. They were W. Ness, John Henderson, J. J. Baston, J. Murdoch, D. Moffatt, J. Ogilvie, G. Lindsay, G. Wade, D. Herd, G. Bell, G. Craig, F. Wright, J. Johnston, J. Butterfield, J. Light, J. Carlyle, W. Alexander, J. Burns, W. Little, G. Mosley, C. Tait, D. Harwood, A. Selkirk, D. Mills, John Sneddon, and J. Ponton. They were unanimously granted. Wade especially was very active in the Edinburgh Branch from its commencement, and nearly every page of its first minute book contains his name. On the other hand,

they were equally unanimous in expelling others for their perfidy, by which some of them obtained promotion. They were Alexander Fotheringham, James Howden, John Airey, James Paton, Alexander McIntyre, Robert Linn, John Brymner, and James Brunton. Other victims were not in benefit.

Shaen and Roscoe were appointed solicitors.

The year 1891 was fruitful of good work. Shorter hours were obtained, and higher wages in many grades. There was a Parliamentary agitation. Men came out into the open, boldly proclaiming their names and opinions. There was increasing membership. All this told its tale, and the results are woven into our history. It was a time when it was the making of men, men with gift of speech, men with deeds of daring and intense conviction. Some of them went under, but the organisation advanced, and 1892 went out with a membership of 29,820. We thought those days wonderful, the results grand; but the best was yet to be.

During 1893 there was a proposal to amalgamate the "Railway Review" with the "Workman's Times," which journal died shortly after. It was proposed by Foot, of West Brompton, and George Green, of Leicester. The "Review" had been a continual financial loss from its very start, and these two members thought it would continue its usefulness in another form and save the drain upon our funds. But only those two voted for the proposal. The Annual Meeting of 1893 decided to issue an insurance coupon for £12. Maddison was made Editor; and so Harford was relieved of one source of criticism. From that time the paper prospered, and during 1895 onward secured a balance on the right side.

Though the signalmen at their conference had decided by a majority of twenty-six against a proposal of S. Lazenby for eight hours, the A.G.M. of that year decided unequivocally for that ideal. It was the placing of itself in line with general labour. Sir George Findlay, of the L. & N. W., who had always acted as if railways should be guarded by a special sanctity of non-unionism, died during the year. Martial in his methods, he was almost exclusive in his method of refusal to recognise Trade Unionism. His very admissions before the Labour Commission for a ten-hour day served to show what progress the official mind was making, but whether it was hostility or favourable admissions towards our cause we fought on, and such autocrats soon became back numbers. So also the lordly scorn from the Great Eastern helped us. Though Lord Claud made many to bite the dust, not one of his victims in the years ahead fared badly. All bettered their position in life, and progress never stayed. This and other things led men more and more, perhaps unduly, because it had a tendency to lessen the strength of their own arm in its first stages, to political aims for achievement of ideals. It was the ferment of a new order.

This year George Howell, the writer of many Labour books, brought forward in the House of Commons a Bill to remove the tax upon the provident funds, and so place those funds on an equality

with those of friendly societies. If an exact computation could be made of the many thousands it had saved the union, and other unions besides ours, it would show a worthy memorial to him. Inside the House and out of it at that time there were clashing words, ideas, aims, actions, and perhaps because of this the little unobtrusive Bill passed through the House and became law.

So far, from 1882 not one set-back in members had taken place from that nadir point, one of the darkest periods of the A.S.R.S., and, in fact, did not till 1895, when it slid back by over 2,000. It had gained by hundreds, and imparted hope; the hundreds lengthened into thousands, and when we reached to nearly 7,000 in one year we began to think the millenium was near. It was the result of individual energy and talent, organising power, the gift of speech, the facile pen, making thought and clinching argument and inspiring action, and was an effective instrument. Conscious manhood stood upon its feet, no longer the willing sport of railway caprice, organisation had taken unto itself a voice and it spoke.

The year 1893 ended with discontent at high tension. There was agitation on the N. E., not unmixed with timidity; matters were strained on the Irish Great Southern and Western, as well as the G. N. of Ireland. It looked in some cases—on more than one railway—as if the friction would end in war. It was only the men's forbearance that prevented it. The movement on the G. N. in Ireland in 1894 was, proportionately to its staff, the most notable achievement of the year. Let Mr. Harford speak: "The threatened struggle on the G. N. in Ireland has been happily averted by the good sense shown by the directors and the moderation and firmness of the men. The increased wages to the various sections of the staff is estimated at nearly £16,000 per annum." He gave in detail the various advances to each grade. It was computed that of the 2,400 employés of that company 2,154 were members. It was at this time also that the Great Western and Southern of Ireland launched their programme, though it did not attain to the same success. The brakesmen's movement on the London and North-Western of England was caught up with so much energy as to alarm the company, so that they engaged understudies. The results the sequel will show. The E.C. showed their practical interest by granting a conference to focus into one programme and movement, with the presentation of a united demand. The trip system and the guaranteed week took attention, piecework presenting unfairness and danger, which was inimical to the safety of life and limb.

Another step forward was the appointment of A. Ford and J. J. Hornby as sub-inspectors. During the year T. Watson, who divided his time between the offices of Organiser and a clerk at the General Office, died in the Brentwood Asylum. He had been sent to Ireland, but it was considered he had not upheld the dignity of the society. He had been made clerk, and the Stratford Branch had trouble with him when he was secretary for a short period. He joined the society in 1878.

F. W. Evans was elected as Auditor of the General Funds by twenty-eight votes, but, alas, although he came to London, he never fulfilled the duties for which he was elected.

During 1893 Robert Whitmore, of Battersea, had been writing in various papers, including the "Railway Herald," with the result that at the August sitting of the E.C. the following resolution was passed, with only one against: "That having taken into consideration the letters sent to the 'Railway Herald' by R. Whitmore, late secretary of the Battersea Society, this Committee is of opinion that the charge made by R. Whitmore is a gross libel and deliberate attempt to injure the society, and calculated to be most injurious to its progress; and we hereby resolve that, unless an apology satisfactory to the General Secretary is published by R. Whitmore in the 'Railway Review' and 'Herald' in the issue of September 1st, he is hereby expelled the society under Rule 9, clause 12." He did not make that apology, and he was expelled. He was afterwards summoned to Clerkenwell Police Court for withholding certain books and moneys belonging to the society. He was ordered to pay a fine of 5s. and 2s. costs, and to deliver up the books within a reasonable time, or suffer one month's imprisonment in default. On February 10th, 1894, he made allegations in the "Evening News and Post," which were brought to the E.C.'s attention by the Kentish Town Branch. He was warned that if he persisted in such falsehoods proceedings would be taken against him or any person or persons who were responsible. "Bob" deserved a better fate. By turning back my readers will see that I denominated him the "Stormy Petrel." Such he remained throughout this history; but it was very regrettable that one who was a delegate to the first General Meeting, and afterwards E.C. man, should go out by expulsion.

During the year the veteran J. Climpson, first Treasurer of the society, retired from active service. He had been guard of the London, Newhaven, and Paris boat train, and during his forty-three years' service it was computed he had made 12,000 journeys. He had a passion for the Orphan Fund, and after the death of the two dogs named "Fred," he trained a dog he named "Help," a painted portrait of which, by Harrison Weir, is in the General Office, and he was instrumental in collecting over £1,000. Even after his death it was said he still "pleads" for the Orphan Fund, as he was stuffed and placed on Brighton Station platform, but is now in the vestibule of Unity House. A presentation was made to Climpson when he retired, and the old man was reminiscent of those far-off days, "when there was no money at all and the Treasurer had to put his hand in his pocket." In responding to the presentation he said he believed he was present at the first meeting of the society, when a few shillings were brought and confided to his care. In those days it was a difficult matter to pay the out-of-work claims which came from all parts of London. His suggestion of a dog was at first laughed at. His first dog got a few pounds together then died; the second one died after collecting £7. "Help" was brought from Scotland. He took immense

pains in training him, and after a lengthy career got too old to travel. Eventually he became deaf and blind and was given to an old shepherd at Newhaven to take care of. Among the list of the men of those far-off times who made best use of the gifts they had, no one deserves more praise than John Climpson.

During the first half of 1894 the "Review," following former losses, was £149 to the bad, but the latter half of the year saw its circulation doubled, the year's increment of membership being over 7,000, making its total 40,993, the largest yet obtained. Well might Mr. Harford say as the days of the year were waning: "Characterised though our past policy has been by moderation, even at times perilously near timidity, we have nevertheless always kept the primary object of our existence steadily in view, and in spite of hostile critics we have had the consolation of reaping rich harvests as the result of our labours. There never was a period in our history when the necessity of wise counsels was more felt. The whole fabric of our society has been built up slowly but surely. We have sought solidarity rather than display, and have been content to make permanent progress by degrees, not seeking to reach the goal by spasmodic dashes. Let us by all means adapt ourselves to the changing circumstances of the times and assert with boldness the righteous demands of Labour, but we shall do well to give the reckless dogmatist the widest of berths. . . . In the past we have striven to give the worker a higher status to enable him to live worthy of his manhood. . . . Ours has not been a barren Trade Unionism, but full of rich blessings to thousands, and its future must be shaped on these lines. This, then, is your task: you have to continue the good work the pioneers began."

Harford was not a man given to periods, but he felt that the society had attained to part of its inheritance, the fulness of which was yet to come, and so to this production of Maddison's he put his signature.

The signalmen's movement went on apace, also the draymen's, platelayers' and the six-day movement. On the North-Eastern the desire was constantly expressed for conferences and meetings. In a sentence, there was "much cry and little wool." So a plebiscite was taken of the N. E. signalmen to bring matters to a point. Of the 2,000 voting papers issued only 900 were returned: 851 expressed themselves as not being satisfied with the altered conditions of the company; forty-five were satisfied; six were neutral; 798 voted for the continuation of the movement and "push it as far as need be"; and only twenty-four for the agitation for better terms. It was little wonder, therefore, that the E.C. refused a further conference and urged its merging into other grades. It was the beginning of the end of the signalmen's movement, which as a recruiting agent for membership had been an excellent factor, and signalmen stood proportionately higher in membership than any other grade.

The six days' movement never had much popularity with those who were subject to a seven-day week, and the success

that was attained, by a curious feature, was won by the efforts of those who enjoyed six days to the week. When it did come there was a remarkable diminution of Sunday work. Whilst it was not paid for the companies were content to work men who need not have worked ; but when payment came many had freer Sundays who could not previously be spared.

The draymen's movement at Sheffield, led by W. Dacey, made a spurt, out of which concessions were gained.

The Taff Vale showed its teeth by refusing R. Powell leave of absence.

After years of ceaseless agitation, which had gripped essentials, a pause ensued. Rest there had been none. Even Trade Union life needs its quiet days ; a time to look about one, backward or forward, as the mood may be. The philosopher then has to take the place of the agitator, however useful and necessary the preacher of divine discontent may be. Texts become threadbare, the best conceived periods and perorations lack charm, satiety is a factor. Such periods should be times of consolidation, during which those whose only mental diet is excitement will fade away in their ways. Consolidation is gained at the expense of progress. In all our enticing history never was a year so barren, so devoid of interest, as 1895 ; had not Hamiltonism been rampant it had been dull to deadness. Mr. Harrison also, on the L. & N. W., gave a little respite from silence in his dealings with brakesmen, and the dismissal of platelayers who could only speak Welsh, which was " a snowflake on the river," and which Lloyd George stopped. The result was that overwork had a revival. A General Election also diverted attention from Labour organisation. Labour men fell in the electoral conflict. True, the signalmen had another conference, but it was more in the nature of the " Dead March " in " Saul " than of sharpening weapons or renewing a conflict. Other grade movements just flickered, and lived ; the six days' movement dragged its weary way ; the Sheffield draymen moved a few steps forward. All the E.C. deliberations and the Annual Congress partook of a Sabbath stillness ; the letters to railway companies, private companies, and colliery owners concerning stiff shackles were perhaps the one constructive event of the year, which died out with a set-back of membership of over 2,000, a lull, and a fall, for the first time since 1882. But the set-back was only temporary, and applied to the closing days of the waning year, because in the next year the old figures of 1894 were eclipsed by 4,000, making the increase 6,000. Here we are presented with an accentuated phase, which has become a permanent feature of our ever-changing historic forms, because, notwithstanding increases, 7,556 members lapsed, while close upon 14,000 new members were made, which left a net increase of 6,000.

The report for this year is signed by Mr. E. Garrity, and tells of the trouble in the year of issue, 1897. Increasing Parliamentary activity

was manifest. Two Eight-Hour Bills were drafted, one for specified grades, the other included all; the society, true to its ideals, took the "larger hope." The art of blocking railway Bills was in vogue, the signalmen of the G. W., who had their representation spragged, suggesting this counter move. It was on the tapis that the Government contemplated an Employers' Liability Bill. A series of brilliant articles in the "Sun" newspaper revealed the master pen of the unnamed writer—F. W. Evans, and which Mr. Harford suggested should be issued as a pamphlet, were an excellent educational factor. Mr. Channing also introduced a Bill to give the representatives of deceased railwaymen, through Trade Union officials, a legal standing at coroners' inquests, which he withdrew under pressure from the Board of Trade, the President (Mr. Ritchie) having denied that railway risks were comparable with mining risks. There was a lack of knowledge and sympathy here: 500 deaths had been recorded for the year—one shunter in 156 was done to death. Mr. Channing's mistake was in restricting the Bill to the narrow phase of railway life. Chagrined, he moved the reduction of the President's salary. London men also formed a deputation to the L.C.C. asking for payment of juries, which resulted in a small fee being given if jurymen lost time.

The outstanding event of the closing days of the year was the gross intimidation by the L. & N. W. Mr. Harrison, of that company, was alarmed by the growth of Trade Unionism on that line, thinking it formidable. Instructions were given to inspectors to put questions plainly to the men—mainly goods guards and signalmen—whether in the event of a strike they would stand by the company or the A.S.R.S. The men, for the most part, declined to answer or announced their intention of standing by the society. These were given notices of dismissal. It was a declaration of war on Trade Unionism. To have bent here would have been disaster. The men would not bow to the L. & N. W. A rupture was imminent; all the material for a wider conflagration was there. It was throwing matches among gunpowder. "We claim the right," said Harrison, "to deal with our own servants as we think expedient." The men equally claimed their rights and stood by them. The Press, and foremost the "Daily Chronicle," made the matter a prominent feature. Its articles were scathing. "Let no one henceforth suppose we have seriously advanced from the blind centuries that have gone before. The servants of the L. & N. W. are to call their souls their own as little as any born-thrall of Cedric the Saxon. 'We' think it expedient that signalmen should work till they are stupid with fatigue, and 'we' are sufficiently powerful to stop even the Board of Trade from seriously controlling our enlightened notions of expediency. Therefore 'we' will train men, or half-train, emergency men to take the place of 'our' skilled pilots of the iron road." The "Manchester Guardian" also did excellent service. Our own paper published scorching sentences clothed with eloquence: "This is the test of manhood. Are freedom of rights and the right to combine to be mercilessly stamped out by tyrants, whose

only power lies in the weakness of the employés through their lack of cohesion." Mr. E. Bancroft, of Stockport, who had taken the first prize of £5 for the largest sale of the "Review" and handed it over to the Orphan Fund, was one of the victims. He was fetched out of his train at Edgely to see his superintendent, Mr. Mawby, and interrogated. He told him he should stand by his fellows, Mawby replying "that it would mean instant dismissal." The E.C. were sitting and dealt with the matter. The G.R.W.U. joined hands. The men won. How? The inner history of these efforts has never been published. Mr. Maddison was then Editor of our organ. He was of the opinion that we were too weak to succeed in a conflict with this powerful company, so set himself to save the men and inflict a defeat upon Harrison. The one involved the other, and a more crushing defeat could not be. It was due to the influence of politicians. It was through them, with whom Maddison had influence, that he pulled the strings. He saw Mundella, who was sympathetic, and stiffened him, he having already been at work. Mundella told Maddison that a frown set itself on the face of one of Jacob Bright's sons, a director of the company, who was evidently annoyed at Harrison's deeds when he (Mundella) pleaded the cause of the men. Another he interviewed was Herbert Samuel, later Postmaster-General. He, with T. Lough, the Member for West Islington, who were shareholders, took action; and so from this side and that personal influence and power bore down their pressure upon Harrison, and he had to capitulate. The Editor of the "Review" told the present writer that it was one of his greatest joys. It was a fight against tyranny, and freedom won. The next issue of our paper had its leading article headed "Coercion Checked." It praised the Press, it praised the men, our General Secretary, and others, but his own effective part behind the scenes was unchronicled. Of the men he said: "We hasten to tender our tribute of honour to the noble band who at the risk of their all steadfastly defended their principles. They acted like men, fearless for the right, and truthful to the last degree. It was their gallant stand which nerved the A.S.R.S. leaders to determined action, and the tale of their wrongs most deeply touched the public conscience."

Amid the increasing pile of our organ's volumes there is no previous year that stands out so bright as this. All its articles were mixed with brains, crisp, bright, trenchant, and caught hold of all phases of our work. For two years, for the first time in its history, it had wrought a profit. The Annual Meeting thanked him, but the next saw his severance from us; but before that we had swopped our horses and crossed the stream. We had welcomed a coming and sped a parting General Secretary. To this sad episode in our history we will now turn.

There had been a movement on the North-Eastern which ended in a strike during 1897. In order to give the bare facts, this report was issued to the Plymouth Congress of 1897, which was formulated by the N. E. Deputaton.

" NORTH-EASTERN RAILWAY DISPUTE, 1897.

" To the Delegates assembled at the Annual General Meeting, held at Plymouth, October, 1897.

" Gentlemen,—At a meeting of the representative deputation of the North-Eastern railwaymen (the said deputation being invested with full powers to settle the above dispute) held on July 13th, 1897, the following charges were preferred against Mr. Edward Harford, General Secretary, for his conduct during the seven days the men were on strike, and also his subsequent conduct at the interviews between the men's representatives and the directors of the company at York on March 12th, 30th, and 31st.

" The matter has already been before the Executive Committee, and that body, realising the gravity of the charges, have relegated the matter to you, and we now ask you to mark your strong disapproval of the manner in which Mr. Harford conducted himself during the period mentioned.

" 1. That Mr. Harford stated to a Press representative at Birmingham that the N. E. men were not justified in their action, that the strike was premature and unauthorised by the society, and if the northerners continued the warfare it would be at their own expense.

" We consider that this expression of opinion by Mr. Harford before making himself acquainted with the true position of affairs from the leaders of the men was most indiscreet on his part as General Secretary, and tended to prejudice our cause in the eyes of the public and officials of the railway company.

" 2. The action of Mr. Harford in calling at the general manager's office at York on his journey from Birmingham to Newcastle on February 23rd before in any way consulting the leaders of the men was most improper, and in our opinion betrayed an undue anxiety on his part to seek an interview with the officials of the railway company.

" 3. That we complain of Mr. Harford insisting to interview Mr. Gibb immediately after arrival at Newcastle before consulting the strike committee and without in any way making himself acquainted with the true position of affairs. He was only prevented from doing as he desired by the pressure brought to bear upon him by the chairman and several members of the committee.

" 4. That we consider that Mr. Harford should have seen that the ' Terms of Settlement,' which were agreed to by himself and Mr. Gibb, were in accordance with the resolution passed at the mass meeting held at the Town Hall on Friday, February 26th, which was rejected by Mr. Gibb in a communication from him to the Press on the following Monday.

" 5. That Mr. Harford failed to carry out the instructions of the deputation in the board-room on March 12th in regard to the question of victimisation, when it was arranged for all to retire, if no satisfactory answer was forthcoming to the questions brought under the notice of the directors.

“ The members of the deputation consider that the answer was unsatisfactory, and wished to retire, but were prevented from doing so by Mr. Harford persisting to remain.

“ 6. That on March 31st Mr. Harford appeared in the committee-room at York very much under the influence of drink, and also attended the board-room in that condition.

“ J. R. BELL, Secretary to the Deputation.”

This was supplemented by J. R. Bell with a speech, with the facts and letters interwoven about eight times as long as the above report, in which the painful facts were mirrored, without any seeming passion on the part of the speaker, as if he was conscious of a burdensome duty, and the facts were enough without any extraneous aid. The reader of the printed report standing three decades and a-half after would not consider the chairman, Mr. A. Little, so successful, but he further outlined the grim story and made it vivid enough. The facts were not in dispute, save on minor things, which was not a matter of concern. Harford admitted them.

The resolution moved by Mr. J. Kelly, of Pontypool, and seconded by Mr. A. Bellamy, of Stockport, was: “ That this Congress, having considered the charges made against Mr. Harford during the North-Eastern crisis, is convinced that they have been proved by the evidence and on his own admission, and do hereby declare that he be now and is hereby removed from his position as General Secretary.” The main amendment moved by Mr. Millington, Birmingham, was: “ That this Annual Meeting, having heard the charges against the General Secretary re the North-Eastern Railway dispute put before us by the deputation representing the men, and having heard Mr. Harford’s reply to the same, are of opinion that the first charges are not proved, but in reference to the sixth charge, he is proved guilty, and for such offence he is deserving of censure, but we think the state of his health at the time is a reason in mitigation of the offence.” For this there voted twenty-three; against, thirty-five; majority, twelve. Then on the motion of George Green, of Leicester, it was unanimously agreed that the result of the amendment be communicated to Mr. Harford. It was conveyed to him, and he left the whole matter in the hands of the Congress. The conveyed vote was to allow him the opportunity of resigning. The resolution was then voted on, and resulted as follows: For, thirty-five; against, twenty; majority, fifteen.

All this is a matter that everyone would willingly have omitted from these pages, if it had been possible. The facts must be recorded to justify the judgment of that meeting. There would also otherwise be a break in this history, because the going of the chief officer cannot under any circumstances be passed over. Mr. Harford was not without defenders. Mr. J. Holmes—and who could wish for a better?—was his defender or, say, pleader, Mr. Holmes not being an official of the A.S.R.S. till the next Congress, held at Leeds, when a further painful episode, or episodes, led to the deposition of one, and very nearly two.



SAM LAZENBY, Treasurer

Part of Mr. Harford's lengthy speech must be put on record: "Mr. President and gentlemen, I need scarcely say that this is perhaps one of the most painful moments in my life. I have had to sit and listen here this morning to a number of painful charges against me, not one of which I am going to deny. But I want to throw myself on the clemency of this gathering and ask it kindly to consider not exactly the whole of my past life, nor my past labours to the society, but the events of the past twelve months or so. There is no doubt that I have been attempting too much, and consequently have wrecked my health, and I have in all probability shortened my life."

Fred W. Evans rushed into the Press with a letter, but he knew nothing of the facts; indeed, the railway world, apart from the North-Eastern, knew nothing of the matter, and in London the matter came like a bolt from the blue, and they wondered what it meant. That fact alone is a tribute to the North-Eastern leaders, who guarded their secret well. Mr. Harford threatened to submit the whole matter to the members and to their vote, in the event of any branch nominating him for the General Secretaryship. Mr. J. Holmes, of Doncaster, moved, with the consent of the movers of the resolution and the amendment: "That, owing to the long services of Mr. Harford with the society, this Congress do grant him the sum of one hundred guineas a year for the remainder of his life." Mr. Pickering seconded. Then another motion, that it be left over till the following morning for Mr. Harford's decision regarding the nomination for the General Secretaryship, was decided by fifty-seven to two. For the grant there voted forty-six; against, none. On the morning of October 7th he accepted the grant. That hasty decisions were not made, the seventy-one printed pages of the report are sufficient to show. It was decided that Mr. Richard Bell be Secretary *pro tem*.

So ended the official career of Mr. Harford, who from 1873, with the exception of a short period, had been an officer of the society, first as district secretary, then from 1883 as General Secretary. He took that office at a time when the records show the society as having 6,321 members, which, judging by its finance, could not have had 5,000 financial members, it had risen to 85,928, and its funds from £27,176 to £197,922, during which period the society had made itself a decisive factor in the life of railwaymen, and had achieved many notable victories and laid the foundation for many more. It was more by his steadiness, not to say conservatism, than by brilliance that he rendered service. Viewed from some standpoints, his outlook upon life and Labour was narrow and restricted. He never soared or indulged in unsubstantial day dreams. He was practical; not an idealist; but he did put in much useful work; and that he was the needed man of the hour, let the progress of the society prove. It was henceforth to be new men, new measures, and for the third time the man came with the hour. The old warrior Harford did not live long to enjoy his pension. Having been appointed as one of the two British delegates

to the Labour Convention in America, he had been to Nashville, and was returning as a passenger on the steamship "St. Paul," and was within a few hours of Southampton when the old warrior gave up his breath; and he who in 1872 had stood by the cradle of the A.S.R.S., and whose hearse is nowhere yet in sight, had finished his debt to human kind, and his works followed him. A worthy memorial ought to have been raised in Abney Park Cemetery, Stoke Newington, where he lies buried. One of the artificial wreaths enclosed in glass has a visible inscription even in 1921.

Twenty-six years of our thrilling history have sped with this chapter.

Chapter XVII.

NEW MEN—NEW MEASURES.

HARFORD being deposed, the supreme question of the moment was, who was to be chief? The candidates and votes were as follow:—

Richard Bell	20,639
Edward Garrity	2,854
Walter Hudson	13,461
Alfred Mear	4,536

No one candidate having a majority over all others, the two highest candidates were again voted upon. The result was as follows:—

Richard Bell	22,671
Walter Hudson	14,518

Majority for Richard Bell 8,153

Mr. Bell, since his appointment as Organiser, had shown considerable activity. His skill in the N. E. arbitration showed that all his latent abilities had not been fully utilised. The short period as General Secretary *pro tem.* had also shown him to be of considerable resource and a capable administrator. In the internal working of the society's affairs a distinct change was noticed. All the work of the society was systematised, departments of office work were made, system and order took the place of the haphazard methods of the General Office. All matters were grouped, statistics became reliable, and for the first time in its history all documents, printed or otherwise, were carefully preserved, and from the first to the last of his official deeds the society's doings found their way into print, and were carefully filed and bound. The historian who dips into its annals from this period henceforth will tread an easy path. Knowledge, certainty, are here; history confronts in clear type; the minutest circular to the largest pamphlet find a place in its archives, and he who wills may run and read. If it is by attention to details that Mr. Bell is to be judged, a favourable verdict would be given. In the greatest conflicts, in the most exacting of times, he surveyed his field, judged the essentialities, and wrought for them; but things large, things small, had orderly treatment and duly found their niche.

So that we turn to a newer and fuller page, which shows a love of order and the historic sense. It would seem as if the old pioneers, either had not this, or had a lack of faith, if we hastily judged, in the continuance of the A.S.R.S. That they had references

to the unborn, and high-pitched phrases of the mighty influence in numbers, finance, and power, the society would become, show. Passing strange it is, then, that they departed and, with the exception of John Abbott, of Wigston, "left not a rack behind." But for the miserly habits of the present writer, of which he has an ample store, not a document would have been available for the purpose of these pages. The great hoard includes the "Railway Review" from its first number, July 16th, 1880, and every E.C. and A.G.M. decision from 1873.

The year 1897, to which we now turn back, has been largely reflected in the last chapter. A small strike had taken place of the men employed in the Forth goods warehouse at Newcastle, because of an alleged departure from the award of Dr. Spence Watson in 1889, which would have increased the hours of labour. Some of the men refused to turn out to work the early morning goods, seven of whom were suspended. This caused a rupture, and in three days 5,600 men had ceased work. The strike lasted six days, and was settled by the company offering to refer the matter in dispute to arbitration, with the wider issues of improved conditions. Lord James of Herford was arbitrator, and Mr. R. Bell, who was then Organising Secretary, represented the men. The meetings lasted from April to August. The proceedings raised an interesting point: The arbitrator decided that those who were not members of the society did not support the claims, desiring no change. The printed proceedings cover 480 pages, with an additional fifty-eight pages of the award. It raised Mr. Bell in the estimation of the members generally, and was an excellent piece of constructive work, and won praise from all parties, including Lord James. Presentations by the men were made to Mr. and Mrs. Bell, and also to Lord James.

At Leeds, in October, the Midland Company locked out some of their men who refused to work overtime. The lock-out lasted thirteen days. Mr. Bell negotiated with Mr. Turner, with the result that all the men were reinstated and a readjustment in wages effected.

The two following resolutions passed by the E.C. show the trend of events and the vigilance of the governing body. It is probable that the second arose out of a closer study of the subject:—

"That in view of the powers assumed by the railway companies to enforce discipline and obedience to regulations, this Committee instruct the General Secretary to approach the companies who are parties to the Railway Clearing House and ascertain officially if the regulation forbidding their servants to trade indirectly is intended to mean that they must not be members of building societies, coal or clothing clubs, farm, garden, and dairy produce associations, co-operative stores, Trade Unions, and sick clubs, or similar forms of mutual thrift, that are based on indirect trading for supplying human needs."

"That we instruct the General Secretary to ask the railway companies who are parties to the Railway Clearing House if the regulations in their rules whereby their employés are instructed that they must devote themselves exclusively to their service is intended to debar them

taking up office in religious, political, or social organisations, or from taking up the ordinary offices that the civilian now takes up in addition to his ordinary occupation."

There is also a flavour of humour in these. At the same sitting they pleaded "the imperative necessity of more working-men magistrates." The same year a great strike arose in the engineering and allied trades. The struggle was a long one. We made a grant of £1,000 and £200 per week, and also took over some investments to quietly aid them. The deeds are still in the possession of the society, one of which includes ancient Beaumaris, in the Isle of Anglesey. The total amount paid to them was £6,200, the Annual Meeting having increased the weekly grant to £300.

Mr. Bell, in his first report to the E.C., December, 1897, referring to the period during which the change was made (that of chief officer), is undoubtedly the most important in the history of the society. First, owing to the rapidly increasing membership, and secondly, in consequence of the national movement having reached such an acute point. The membership had been mounting up week by week, and the figures were published, going up one week after another by thousands, so that in the first week of July, 1897, they had reached a total of 27,484 new members for the year, which by September attained to 32,941.

Twice after the conference of all grades at Birmingham the companies had been approached by the society asking them to agree to arbitration on the proposals which had been submitted. Only a few replied, and they were acknowledgments only. Then Ritchie, of the Board of Trade, was approached:—

"Sir,—You are doubtless aware from Press reports that there has been for a long time an agitation for improved conditions of employment by the men employed upon the railways of England and Wales, which has now developed to a critical position. I am directed by the representatives of the men to lay the whole facts of the situation before you with a view to your kind intervention in the matter, and bringing about a conference of the men's and companies' representatives to discuss the various points at issue, thus preventing serious dislocation of the railway communication of the country. . . ."

The letter went on to say that after many futile efforts for negotiation the men felt that they were being played off against each other by the respective companies, which led to a conference in November, 1896, and April, 1897, when they requested an interview with their respective officers or directors, which the companies had ignored, so that another conference was held at Birmingham on October 11th and 12th, 1897, when 120 men decided to merge the grade proposals and present them simultaneously, asking for a reply by November 16th, which communication was not even acknowledged, and that the men were considering the withdrawal of their labour. So that the situation was critical, and it was the desire of all that the calamity of a strike

should be averted. After a very lengthy preamble covering the points of Mr. Bell's letter, the reply of the Board of Trade was :—

“ The Board of Trade regret that neither from the manner in which the document containing the proposals was presented to the companies, nor from the matter which it contained, was the prospect of a friendly reception of it by the companies made hopeful, and the Board is unable to consider that even if they were disposed to urge upon the companies the request made by you for a conference, with this document as a basis, a favourable answer would be given to such a request. Railwaymen have onerous and responsible duties to perform, and they have deserved well of the State. They stand in an exceptional position among workmen, and Parliament has recognised this fact by passing legislation dealing with their hours of labour. The Railway Regulation Act, 1893, has provided means by which questions of excessive hours may be brought before this Department and dealt with. Under that Act many representations in favour of a reduction of hours have been made by the Board of Trade to individual companies, and the Board feel it right to say that, as a rule, the companies so addressed have readily acceded to the suggestions made by the Department in the interests of the men. The Board have no reason to doubt that the several companies will listen to and discuss with the men in their employment the representations with regard to matters affecting the interests of the latter, but should there be any case in which a difficulty occurs in obtaining a friendly meeting the Board will readily use their good offices with a view to the removal of the difficulty. The opposite policy, namely, that of endeavouring to deal with the companies as a body, presents no prospects of success, and the Board feel that no good purpose would be served by entering into negotiations with the companies with a view to obtaining a conference. They regret, therefore, that they must definitely decline to intervene in the matter suggested in your letter.”

And it went on to say that the suggestion of a strike would be inconsistent with their exceptional position.

The conference of October had decided to present their programme to the companies demanding a definite reply by November 15th, 1897, and at the same time offering to submit the matter to arbitration. Failing satisfactory replies, another conference was to be called on November 23rd, 1897. A still greater number of delegates met on that date, when it was decided to ask the other railway organisations to join hands with them. The correspondence that had passed between the companies and Mr. Bell was read. Seventeen companies acknowledged formally the communication, five either declined to consider them or said the usual method was open to their employés. Resolutions were passed offering the companies arbitration, replies to be received by November 30th, the President of the Board of Trade to be informed of what was done, voting papers to be issued to grade secretaries, and

they to return them by December 6th, the men being assured they would not be used unless a sufficient percentage was to hand to enforce the demands. The following resolution and amendments were moved. They are given in full because it has always been in dispute with large sections of men whether what was passed was applicable to all employés or only society men. The resolution was: "That this conference is of the opinion that 75 per cent. of the whole of the men's notices should be obtained before extreme action is taken." To this was moved: "That the question as to the number of notices to hand before extreme action is taken be left in the hands of the E.C." For this four voted; against, seventy. "That 50 per cent. of the members of the A.S.R.S. be obtained before action is taken" found thirty-nine in favour; sixty-one against. The resolution was passed by fifty-seven to seventeen. It was also resolved to hold meetings in large centres, and that in the event of a strike no grade to return to work till all grades received satisfaction. Week by week the "Review" had been chronicling the increased members, and had by November 26th credited the society with 47,381 new members.

December 6th was the date when the E.C. met, and the correspondence which had been received from the Board of Trade, given above, was read, also the replies from the other unions, when a lengthy resolution covering half-a-page of E.C. minutes, as printed, dealt with them. Tevenan had handed in notices to the Irish companies, and afterwards withdrew them, and they passed a resolution regretting the action both in sending and withdrawing their notices, "thereby causing the collapse which had taken place." There had been a collapse, then? Why? The following resolution passed unanimously on the motion of Williamson and Steels, explains it: "That this Committee regrets that Mr. Maddison, M.P., should have written such an article as appeared in the last issue of the 'Railway Review,' as he is not a member of the society, and did not consult any responsible officer, and could not, therefore, know the true state of affairs without such consultation." It was published in the Press. Maddison, who had fought the Brightside division of Sheffield on the death of Mundella and won the seat, was away, and came home on the Monday. Coming home he saw on the placards of the "Evening News" "Mr. Maddison, M.P., censured."

The E.C. had not waited for any explanation, but in their haste had passed the resolution, in the eagerness to show the companies that an article which had appeared was not the considered findings of the society. This was proposed after they had seen Maddison: "That this E.C. accept the explanation of Mr. Maddison, that the opinion expressed in the 'Railway Review' of December 3rd was based on the desire to serve the best interests of the society and an incorrect reading of the decision arrived at by the Birmingham conference." This had only three votes for. An amendment: "That, having heard Mr. Maddison's explanation as to his reasons for writing the leading article which appeared in the 'Railway Review' of

December 3rd, this Committee is of opinion that he is no longer a fit and proper person to edit our paper, and therefore calls upon him to send in his resignation," received five votes. A second amendment: "That, having heard Mr. Maddison's explanation, this Committee does not consider such satisfactory, and hopes that in similar circumstances in the future he will consult the General Secretary before going to Press" was voted for by all, with the exception of three. This was the offending leading article:—

"The railway world is agitated to-day as it has never been before. There are signs of strife on every hand. In Ireland the battle has all but begun; in Scotland, if less pronounced, the struggle for shorter hours is keen and determined; in Wales the movement is assuming more definite shape; whilst in England the men have now to decide what shall be the next step in the event of their further offer of arbitration being rejected. With considerably over 90,000 members, the A.S.R.S. is a factor to be reckoned with, and at the present moment it has powerful forces at its command, all animated with the same spirit and working in harmony; differences of grade are forgotten in the common good."

The article discounted the programmes as being revolutionary: Eight hours for drivers and firemen was not unreasonable; ten hours the maximum limit for signalmen was moderation itself; eight hours for goods guards and shunters could not be called extravagant. The wages demand was to bring wages somewhere near the level of the majority of other industries, the article going through them, extolling their moderation, and urging companies to meet the men, instead of indulging in platitudes, and stating that strikes were stern realities. If the voting was independent the leaders had a good guide to future action. In England if the companies refused to arbitrate, a strike would be their just punishment, and it might, through the employers' stupidity, be a necessity on the morrow if in the morning it was deemed inexpedient. "There must be a substantial percentage in favour of a strike. Even with an overwhelming majority in favour of immediate action, it will not necessarily be taken." It pleaded for level heads and true hearts. "With these the victory must be ours, but how soon depends entirely upon the strength of the A.S.R.S. With 90,000 it is within sight; 150,000 would make it a certainty. It is all a question of the size of the battalions. Are they at present large enough? Candidly, we think not. And that is why we favour a further period for strengthening our forces before the final encounter."

This was read by thousands without them thinking that there was anything extraordinary in it. The real objection to the article lay in quite other causes than that of preventing a strike, of which there was, so far as appearances go, but little danger. But the minds that have no share in the secrets of government are unaware of intentions, and it was because "the pitch was queered" that the trouble came, rather than from any inherent thing in the article itself. On the other hand, the tactics that were pursued were not without an element of

danger, which might arise through the ignorance of the rank and file. Bell was anxious to score a success, and this was one of the efforts of diplomacy, which fear of a strike might lead to public action and bring a victory. There was with Maddison a rankling sense of injustice that the vote of censure should have been passed in his absence, without a word of explanation from him. So what followed was not so much the merits or demerits of the article, as that passions had been stirred. Neither of the two disputants, Bell and Maddison, judged matters with a clear vision, and both used words against each other that did not make for the collective good. Both were strong personalities. Both had an extensive vocabulary—Maddison leading in that. He resented the vote because he aimed to shield railwaymen from folly. So in the next issue letters appeared which Bell took exception to and wanted omitted, when the Editor replied that not a comma should be altered. The governing body decided that a severance was necessary, and Maddison resigned, was paid his wages, and went.

He then used the columns of a Peterborough paper, under the control of Mr. Winfrey, who became the Member for South Norfolk, and also used a Welsh paper. Bell replied in a four-page pamphlet (E.C. minute book size) dealing with the matter, which was issued to the branches. Such controversies, however, are of the moment, and soon die away. Later, when Mr. Maddison saw how well Mr. Bell was shaping the organisation, he gave him unstinted praise for his good generalship, his clear mental vision, and praised his courage and his activities.

The passing of Maddison, of course, involved the appointment of another Editor, and advertisements appeared announcing the vacancy and the conditions of the Editorship. During the intervening period Garrity, and W. Dacey, who had contributed to the paper under the *nom de plume* of "Judex," did the work. In answer to the advertisement, out of twenty applications for the post Mr. G. J. Wardle, of Keighley, was appointed Editor, which office he continued to hold till February, 1918.

Then it was that dissatisfaction had been expressed by the readers of the paper, they thought the paper was declining in merit, and the Sub-Editor having to act under his direction could not do as he wished. The directors of the paper—after the Linaker libel case it passed into the hands of a company—thought that the Editor must either control it efficiently or allow the Sub-Editor to do so. Mr. Wardle, who, with others, had joined the Coalition Government, had, after the General Election, notwithstanding that the Labour Party, of which he was a part as Member for Stockport, severed themselves, continued with the new Government, as did Roberts, of Norwich. So they directed the chairman of the company to write to Mr. Wardle asking him as to his intentions. He replied to the chairman on March 1st, 1918:—

"In further reply to yours of the 28th of February I desire to state that after a long and careful consideration I have decided to ask the directors to accept my resignation as Editor of the

‘Railway Review’ and secretary of the King’s Cross Publishing Company, to date as from March 31st next. On that date I shall have completed twenty-one years’ service in one capacity or the other, and for most of the period in both, and should like to retire then. It is a long period and, I believe, unique in the history of Trade Union journalism.”

The resignation was accepted, and Mr. Willet Ball, who had been appointed Sub-Editor in September, 1900, was appointed Editor, after which all complaints as to the conduct of the paper ceased, and there came expressions of appreciation as to the higher literary merit and wider interest created by new and capable contributors.

During the year 1897 the Trustees had, on the instructions of the Executive, purchased the freehold site and a shell of a building, formerly a printing office, at 72, Acton Street, which the General Builders fitted up at a cost of £1,670, and this now became our home. The Executive during 1897 proposed the Federation of Trade Unions, out of which grew the existing Federation. The next year, at the instance of the Doncaster Branch, the Executive Committee passed the following resolution, to be placed on the agenda of the Trades Union Congress: “That this Congress, having regard to its decisions in former years, and with a view to securing a better representation of the interests of the House of Commons, hereby instructs the Parliamentary Committee to invite the co-operation of all Co-operative, Socialist, Trade Union, and other working-class organisations to jointly co-operate, on lines mutually agreed upon, in convening a Special Congress of representatives from such of the above-named organisations as may be willing to take part to devise ways and means for securing the return of an increased number of Labour Members to the next Parliament.” Tom Steels, of Doncaster, was the author, and J. Holmes at Plymouth proposed it. This was adopted at Plymouth by the Trades Union Congress by 540,000 to 434,000, and led to the formation of the Labour Party, to which we affiliated.

During 1898 a strike occurred in Ireland on the Cork and Bandon Railway over Mr. Buckley, a signalman, who had been one of a deputation to the company, and who was found to have omitted in his train book the entry of a passing light engine, and was reduced from 21s. to 14s. per week. They sent an ultimatum to Mr. Croker, the general manager, who refused to consider it, or listen to Mr. Bell. Public bodies intervened, and the men, with the exception of about a hundred, returned to work. This unauthorised strike cost the society over £7,000. Several of the men were also imprisoned and fined, their sentence being confirmed on appeal, and fourteen of them were evicted from their homes. This year also there was a twenty-one weeks’ strike of miners in South Wales, which cost the society over £11,000 in grants and donations to our members who suffered in consequence. The Midland draymen and goods workers at Leeds and Sheffield also struck work without official sanction in support of their

representative, Mr. Morley. A Leeds committee, it was considered, had usurped the authority of the General Secretary and Executive. So serious was this misgovernment that the E.C. held a special meeting at Leeds to consider the whole question, a verbatim report of which covers 125 pages.

At the Annual Congress, 1898, held at Leeds, Mr. Tevenan, Organising Secretary, resigned, and Mr. J. Holmes, of Doncaster, was appointed Organiser for the West of England, and Mr. W. Hudson for Ireland. This necessitated a new President, and for Mr. George Green, of Leicester, and Mr. George Thaxton, of Leeds, there were twenty-six votes each, and Mr. Hudson gave his casting vote in favour of Thaxton. The boy of the Congress was J. H. Thomas, now General Secretary, who had started membership with the Associated, but became converted and joined the A.S.R.S. In the records of that Congress he is named Joseph. At that Congress the delegate from Norwich was Mr. G. Lathan, now assistant secretary to the Railway Clerks' Association.

For that year we had a drop of 31,502 members, the worst set-back ever yet experienced. Those members who came in on a wave of excitement went out with the calmer time. The branch funds show that for the greater part they had only paid their entrance fees, or very few premiums. It is not out of such material that organisations are built up; it is not by such men that victories are gained. They were true to themselves who were true to the union, and like all floodtides it brought with it men who replaced old workers, whose interest had waned, and others whom death had claimed. The problem of retention of recruits was then, and has been ever since, one of the pressing problems from which perhaps we shall never be free. Despair, however, never seized these leaders of men. They knew, as all reformers know, there was yet a to-morrow, and with that to-morrow would be new men, new causes, fresh hopes, and the song of battle would again be in the air, our strength would be renewed, and we should seal new victories, gain fresh adherents, and it was so. Reformers, as we have said, never admit final defeat; hope is always justified, and the world is kept young and strong by hopefulness, courage, and labour.

At the 1897 Congress, there having been much discussion in the Trade Union world with regard to proposals for federation, the Congress, probably because it was more intent upon other things, adopted the following resolution: "That this Congress approve of the 'Clarion' Trades Federation Scheme, and instructs the E.C. to use every endeavour to secure its adoption by other Trade Unions." The next year it was rejected, Mr. J. E. Williams contending that the scheme had not been sufficiently discussed, and the next year, although a proposal was on the agenda in favour, it was not even moved. It was artificially foisted upon us, found an advocate in the "Review," and the whole scheme died of ridicule, after the various Trade Unions had discussed it. But efforts were made by the Trade Union world toward federation. The members of the society were balloted. The question asked them

was, whether they were in favour of joining the Trade Union Federation scheme, to pay 6d. or 1s. per quarter in excess of present premiums, when there voted: Yes, 3,243; No, 6,902. Were they in favour of joining some federation scheme, still paying for same extra to premiums. On this question 4,399 voted Yes, the No's deciding it by 5,291 votes.

Federation proposals with the Associated and the G.R.W.U. were again discussed, as they had ever been, almost times without number, with the same end; the unvaried result was failure. The Associated and ourselves met at the Green Dragon, Leeds, on January 3rd, 1900, with Mr. Parfitt, an Associated man, in the chair, and twelve members from each society. Various clauses to govern the federation were adopted. They lasted awhile; but in their working broke down, and the reproach of disunion is now as it was three decades ago, nor has it, as yet, any hopeful vista.

The G.R.W.U. had taken a vote on the subject, and there voted for amalgamation 724, and against 574, which result they deplored, but at the same time considered the basis was not broad enough to admit of it receiving the consideration it deserved. Then a few branches of the G.R.W.U. seceded and came over to the A.S.R.S., among which were Glasgow (South Side), Cowlairs, and Hamilton Branches.

Mr. Ritchie had brought in an amending Railway Regulation Act in 1899, when Mr. A. Hickman, Member for Wolverhampton, with a strong deputation of private wagon owners, waited upon Mr. Ritchie strongly urging him to withdraw the Bill, whilst Lord Stalbridge, Lord Claud Hamilton, and others also urged it in the "Times." A petition was presented by 15,000 railwaymen that the Bill should be passed, but the opposition was so strong that Mr. Ritchie dropped, and on March 30th it was withdrawn and a Royal Commission appointed.

Mr. Hopwood, who during his term of office had performed many excellent services for railwaymen, collected a mass of statistics, some of them from America. Thereupon Mr. Bell visited America, interviewed car makers, transport companies, and the unions concerned in the matter, where he obtained abundant confirmation of the accuracy of Mr. Hopwood's investigations and figures. The members of the Commission were: Lord James (Chairman), Lord Hampden, Sir G. E. Paget, Sir G. Molesworth, Sir J. Barry, Sir H. Hickman, Sir C. Scotter, A. E. Fellowes, J. E. Ellis, C. Fenwick, H. Ackworth, Professor Elliot, H. H. Cunynghame, and W. Hudson. The question of couplings was the chief theme. It was on these matters that Mr. Bell was always at his best. That orderliness of his, which was not so much a habit as a passion, came into full play, and he marshalled his facts and statistics and gave his evidence with skill, and for one whole day he stood the test of cross-examination with the unfriendly element on the Commission, and here, as in the other case, with the same Chairman, did a splendid piece of constructive work. Whatever prejudice might hereafter concoct and decide, here were the facts for improved couplings, the value of which had been demonstrated in America. At

that time he was able to say with confidence "The report of the Royal Commission on Accidents, and the powers that will no doubt be conferred on and given effect to in connection with dangerous railway operations, will mark a great step in the history of the society." We shall see.

For three years a proposal was before the society for a widows' fund, to further extend the Orphan Benefits in another way, but a Trade Union sense was growing that it was undesirable to keep adding the benefit element, and so it was turned down, and ultimately died.

During 1898-9 Mr. Fred W. Evans wrote a long series of articles in the "Railway Review" on the society and what it stood for. Fred never lost his love for the society, and during 1890 Mear had prevailed upon him to speak in favour of the national movement, and the speeches were considered worthy of being published as a pamphlet. In these articles he reviewed the work of the society and its policy in all its stages of supplying the needs that grew out of misfortunes, showing also its constructive aims and accomplishments and dealing with the then current phases with regard to safety appliances and Acts of Parliament. His hand had not lost its cunning. Perhaps the best article of all was that in which he dealt with the isolation policy of the Enginemen, when he—as he did when the Chapman effort was made to start a society exclusively of enginemen, as outlined in a previous chapter—again stressed the facts of history. If ever the N.U.R. should for the purposes of propaganda want the facts that preceded the advent of the A.S.R.S. with regard to enginemen, or, for the matter of that, "What the society has done" all the necessary material can be found in these articles. To show his view of the folly of isolation the compiler should turn up the "Railway Service Gazette" of June 21st, 1878, and the "Railway Review" of June 30th, 1899. I cannot forbear quoting a short paragraph of his appreciation of enginemen. It has four lines of heading: "Our Enginemen—United Enginemen's Society—Its Failure on the N. E.—The Success of the A.S.R.S." He opens: "Taken as a whole, the enginemen of the 'sixties were sturdy, fearless, and manful. Their personal risks and exposures were greater than those of present-day drivers. The structural improvements of the locomotive and the better methods and appliances introduced for working trains and traffic have largely increased the safety and comfort of those on the footplate. But whether or not the manly independence which characterised the drivers of thirty years ago has been maintained in the march of time and changes is open to question. Up to about 1871 the engineman was the only railwayman who dared call his soul his own, or who assisted the claims of Labour and manhood. The men in the other grades were as submissive as serfs, too fearful to whisper a complaint or breathe a request for just treatment. It was, therefore, not unreasonable that the locomotive men fought for their own hand and formed the exclusive United Enginemen's Society in 1866; the more especially as in the preceding year an attempt to unite trafficmen had proved abortive. But all this has

changed since 1867. 'The men of the traffic and permanentway staffs are no longer 'like dumb driven cattle,' whilst the collapse of the United Enginemen demonstrated that even the most resolute section in the service could not single-handed hold its own against the companies. Then the A.S.R.S., with its broader platform for uniting all sections, came into existence, and it has since its formation again and again proved to enginemen the value and protection of a comprehensive society." He then gave historic facts, with praise for the enginemen: "It was a fighting and determined union in downright earnest about the rights of enginemen. Indeed, the very courage of the members carried them over the boundary line of discretion into rash and ill-considered conflicts, which eventually proved fatal to the society. The 'Train,' edited by Mr. Edwards, through whose columns directors and officials were told plain truths in blunt language, is refreshing to read even at this day." After a column of history he concluded the article: "My readers will perhaps contrast the two N. E. strikes and their results. That of 1867 by enginemen exclusively led to disaster, defeat, and loss, whilst that of 1897, shared in alike by enginemen, guards, signalmen, and others, brought about the blessings of arbitration and a fair and satisfactory consideration of the workers' demands upon the company." It is what I urged in an earlier page, that any attainment by a sectional society has been by the sure shield of an all-grades society behind it. But the Associated are like the Bourbons.

Further on in the same series of articles he had "A word with the enginemen," showing exclusiveness was weakness. So also did Edward Garrity in a debate with Sunter at Newport at this time, which covered several pages of our organ, and which the members asked to be published as a pamphlet. The originator of the debate was J. H. Thomas. Not only had Garrity to impart ideas, but to correct facts, which the Associated had always an easy facility for twisting—vide law reports.

The other events which we are now describing and which carry us well into 1900 are the conflicts with that society, the matter of couplings, and greater safety. Here is a fact which has more than once cut across our history, that when a lull has come in an agitation for hours and wages safety methods have been taken up with vigour. Cases of victimisation were taken up with the Board of Trade. They were shown that whilst the men were aiding the admitted aims of the Board of Trade the companies were dismissing men for these deeds. We were also actively urging and practising, where opportunity presented itself, conciliation as a method of settling differences.

Pattinson and Brewer, of 30, Great James Street, Bedford Row, were appointed the solicitors in December, 1899.

Both the Port Talbot and the N. E. movements were settled on agreed terms, one at the end of December, 1899, and the other at the beginning of 1900. Taff Vale matters were coming to a head.

Mr. Ritchie, whatever defects he had, was one of the best helpers we had at the Board of Trade, and was sincerely desirous of doing more.

The employing interests were weighted against his railway regulation proposals; and he bowed before them, but only to change his tactics and make sure of his ground, and though we denounced the Government's vacillations in order to urge them forward, yet we were quite conscious of the political differences that beset him.

Mr. Hopwood had collected a mass of statistics from the United States with regard to inventions and the use of safety appliances for coupling purposes. Mr. Bell, with the direct evidence and familiarity with what was being done in the United States, had come back with a mass of information for use in evidence before the Royal Commission. The Commission sat for eighteen days, examined thirty witnesses, visited goods yards, witnessed shunting operations, and went into the whole matter with a zest and a thoroughness that no Commission ever did before. Mr. Bell was under examination for the whole of one day. They examined the causes of fatal and non-fatal accidents, the workers themselves, the railway companies, and the truck owners with a view to the possibility of adopting means to reduce the number of accidents. Rules and regulations made for safety were considered, and they brought within the scope of their authority mechanical appliances, the powers of the Board of Trade for making and enforcing rules for safety. They showed the total number of railwaymen employed in 1898 as being 534,141, and that 522 were killed and 12,826 injured during the same year. It showed that these figures were distributed unevenly because of comparative freedom from risks in some occupations, which gave an average of 1.24 per 1,000 killed for all workers, other than clerks and mechanics, and after giving each grade with shown risks, the fatal accidents worked out at: for goods guards 2.92; permanentway, 1.9; shunters, 5.08, which had risen from 3.6 in three years. They pointed out the difficulties of working the shunting-pole at night, with the pole in one hand (which could only be used with loose couplings) and the lamp in the other. In their report they showed how Sir Hicks-Beach had in 1874 urged better mechanical appliances and sought to remove them by the means of a proposed Bill in 1889, which was not proceeded with. They also referred to the Darlington exhibition of couplings in 1882, and the later ones at Nine Elms and Newcastle, promoted by the A.S.R.S. Doing their work well, with abundant evidence for an amendment of the law, it encouraged Ritchie to bring in another Bill in February, 1900, a Bill with fifteen clauses, which became law; and Bell achieved his second great triumph as a result.

The orderliness of mind mentioned, with skill in presenting facts and in marshalling evidence, which, with Walter Hudson on the Commission to ply suggested questions, made for that success. Members of Parliament and prospective Members were written to, as the prospect of an General Election seemed near. "Mabon" wrote in the "South Wales Daily News": "No doubt the Government will claim the lion's share of the credit for the passing of the Bill in its present form. Well, let them have that which is due. But very little

is due outside that which belongs to Lord James and Mr. Ritchie. The main credit, however, is due to the continuous and persistent agitation, in season and out of season, of the A.S.R.S., and especially during recent years to the General Secretary, Mr. Bell, for whose assistance, according to Lord James' personal testimony to myself, this Royal Commission is greatly indebted. And, seeing that the railway directors and shareholders' interests are strongly and ably represented in the House of Commons, his entry into that assembly in the interests of railway workers would be a matter of general congratulation." This was 1900, and he had been elected for Derby, the result of the contest being :—

Roe	7,917
Bell	7,640
Bemrose	7,389
Drage	6,766

On the night of Friday, April 20th, a fire broke out at the General Office in Acton Street, in the offices used for the conduct of the "Railway Review," which destroyed some of the most valuable literature of the society, among which was a complete file of the "Railway Service Gazette," twenty years' issue of the "Railway Review," and sundry Parliamentary papers, including the reports of the Select Committee on the Hours of Railway Servants, a decade before. A most searching inquiry was made into the matter, the first of which was held on Sunday, May 13th. The fire was discovered by the porter Harford, the son of the late General Secretary, and was then well alight, which opened up questions outside the actual fire and showed considerable looseness in the conduct of the paper. As to the cause of the fire, there were definite opinions, but opinions are not necessarily facts, so the E.C. passed this resolution: "That having heard the evidence of the Editor, Sub-Editor, and caretaker with reference to the fire, we are of opinion that the cause cannot possibly be traced, and consequently blame cannot be attributed to anyone." This was passed also: "That this Committee wishes to express strong disapproval of the way in which the finances of the 'Railway Review' are conducted, the Editor and Sub-Editor each taking a part of the duties, with apparently no responsible head. We instruct Mr. Wardle that he is wholly responsible for conducting the 'Railway Review,' financially and otherwise, to this Executive." The Sub-Editor was W. Dacey.

Another was passed deploring the fact that certain books had been tampered with since the fire, but they had not sufficient evidence to say who was responsible, with certain other resolutions covering safety for the future and a better system of bookkeeping. The Editor appealed to the June sitting of the E.C. against Decisions Nos. 5, 9, and 10 of that meeting, as the resolutions were arrived at before a full inquiry had been instituted and without taking into account all the circumstances, and protested that the inquiry was undemocratic and unfair to all concerned. Had he been present he said it would

not have been done. In defence of the E.C. of that period it must be said that shorthand notes were taken of the proceedings, and, as one of the resolutions said, all had been examined who were concerned in the fire. Both the Editor and his assistant were present at one and the same time. At this June sitting they divided the matters into three heads : (1) Matters raised by Mr. Wardle. (2) Mr. Dacey's conduct and suspension since the special meeting. (3) Falsification of the accounts and destruction of the books. As questions had arisen in respect to the receipt books, Mr. Tyler was called in. All were cross-examined and ten minutes' speech allowed them; and they sat well into midnight to get to the root of matters. They accepted Mr. Tyler's statements with regard to the books, which Mr. Dacey had raised. With one against and two neutral, they dispensed with Dacey's services. By a majority of one, they turned down the following amendment : " That Mr. Wardle is no longer a fit and proper person to hold the post of Editor, and that he be asked to resign, and a salary assigned." The following resolution was supported by seven out of thirteen : " That after hearing the evidence respecting the fire at General Office this Committee is strongly of opinion that Mr. Wardle has failed to assert his position as Editor, and that his conduct be reported to the next A.G.M., and in the interval the Auditors be asked to go through the accounts and report to our next meeting."

During this E.C. an application received from the Editor for an increase of salary was referred to the A.G.M., which does not appear to have dealt with it, but in any case, in view of what had happened, it was not diplomatic.

Chapter XVIII.

STRIKES, STRESS, AND LAW.

A PROLONGED coal strike had taken place in 1898, which cost the A.S.R.S. £10,168, after the termination of which there was difficulty in getting the Taff Vale Company to provide the guaranteed week, according to the terms of the 1890 agreement, which produced friction. The men held mass meetings for five successive Sundays at Cardiff, and the resolutions were sent to the General Manager, who ignored them. The men decided on October 30th that unless the guaranteed week was restored that week they would hold a mass meeting on November 6th to consider ceasing work. Bell went down and persuaded them to abandon the question of a strike, and to let the society take legal proceedings in accordance with the agreement, which they loyally accepted, when the company restored the guaranteed week as from October 24th. The Barry and Rhymney, on the other hand, as soon as circumstances permitted, restored the week's work.

During 1899 the South Wales men formulated a programme, which the E.C. sanctioned, eliminating questions of privileges they had specified, and J. Holmes was instructed to keep all these under his especial supervision and cancel all other engagements, if any stood in the way. The Brecon and Merthyr men were to be allowed to send in their notices to enforce demands. The company yielded concessions, and an agreement was entered into, with the signature of J. Gale for the company and J. Holmes for the men.

Later the South Wales men of the Taff Vale, Rhymney, Barry, and Cardiff united and formed a committee of all grades, and in October sanction was given to the movement, and an offer was made to submit the matter to arbitration, and failing a reply within six days a ballot be taken with a view to enforcing demands. In the South Wales joint movement the vote of the four companies, with 2,541 employés, on the question as to whether they should strike or not, was as follows: 1,817 in favour and 353 against. The vote not coming up to the 90 per cent. standard it was considered abandoned. Proposals may be made, but events warp intentions.

On September 1st, 1899, in the "Railway Review," the Taff Vale were confronted once again with the agreement of 1890, which had been signed by Inskip, Harford, and Richards, the signalmen's delegate. This, which was printed in full, was preceded by "An Open Letter," in which the writer said: "In 1890 you won the admiration of all Trade Unionists by the noble stand you made, and perhaps it would be as well to remind you that that was a united stand of all grades. But

I hope I shall not wound your vanity by asking you what has taken place since. Some of the men who acted on your behalf then have now been removed from the service, and you have scarcely complained. They suffered through fighting your battle, but you felt little for them. Efforts have been made to get you to act again, but you don't seem interested in the movement. An observer might ask: Are your conditions of service as well to-day as they were in 1891? Since then the guards have been blessed with a journal that adds to their responsibility. The drivers and firemen have been forced into a coal-saving competition, which does not make their lot any the happier. The signalmen have (through the introduction of the absolute block, and the increase in telephone and delay return work) had their work increased altogether out of proportion to the concessions they gained in 1890. The hours of labour have been so arranged that you are crying out bitterly against night work. . . . Since 1890 you have been promised a pension, and this might have something to do with the bringing of the happy indifference you apparently seem to enjoy. Some of you complain of your grievances along the line, but you seem to forget that it is your duty to see that something should be done to have them removed. It may be said that you have been misled to a certain extent by the highly coloured programmes that have been drafted, regardless of the circumstances that you were placed in. You may have been led to think more of what you should include in a programme than what you were as a body able to demand and get. But the last programme laid before you had been reduced so as to ask for that which you could have gone in and fought for. Your treatment of all efforts seems to indicate that you enjoy all the grievances you complain of, and that you don't wish to be put to the inconvenience of removing them. Excessive hours don't seem to trouble you. An eight-hour cabin doesn't seem to be worth going in for, and, if what is to hand is correct, you seem to trouble more about a few shillings advance than a reduction of hours. . . . Your agreement has been repeatedly attacked, and many of you act as if it was hardly worth defending. To an impartial mind you seem totally indifferent how you are treated, and that you enjoy that happy-go-easy method of letting things drift to a position of weakness; but ere long you will wake up and find this policy has been carried on too long. The workman's indifference is the master's opportunity. Whilst trade is good and circumstances favourable to move, you allow yourselves to drift to a position of weakness. . . . If you fail unitedly, which has not taken place yet, you will certainly fail sectionally. This has been proved over and over again, but you seem to ignore the lessons of the past. I am writing thus hoping that it will be a means of stirring you to action, and to set aside the apathy and indifference which exists among you. A meeting will be called of the men of the three lines. Let this meeting demonstrate that the old spirit of 1890 has returned, and that you are prepared to act unitedly, wisely, and effectively.—Yours, etc.,

UNIONIST."

This appeal to a past triumph, the scorn, the vitriolic sentences, are such as would stir men when discussed in the branch-room, taunts which would wound their pride and make men leap to their feet with a hoarse yell of anger to prove they were not cowards and poltroons, and to go forth and do. Among the most apathetic it would fall as dull, dead sound, but to those who had, or thought they had, a historic reputation to sustain, it would be the gauge of battle. Men would ask themselves, "Lives there a being with a soul so dead" that will not repeat a deed once done, and done so well? This letter came directly on the heels of a meeting at Cardiff on the Sunday previous, at which spirited speeches were made. Even Mr. Bell said: "They would not come out unless all efforts at an amicable settlement failed, but at the same time let it be clearly understood that they were not going to lie down at the dictation of the Cardiff Railway." These speeches would have an echo on the Taff and be a call to action.

On October 1st the Barry and Rhymney men formulated a programme, and on October 19th an all-grades meeting at Pontypridd decided to stand by their committee. Within the next few days meetings were held at Cardiff, Swansea, Port Talbot, and other places. Mr. Bell issued in the "Review" of October 27th a spirited manifesto, which was followed in the next issue with an "Open Letter to All Railwaymen," by the Editor. On November 28th Moses Jones wrote to the Taff Vale asking them to receive a deputation, but no answer was received until December 9th, the company then declining to receive them. At the Executive sitting in December the Executive Committee offered arbitration to the four companies, failing which a ballot was to be taken to decide whether they were willing to enforce their demands. At Park Hall, Cardiff, on January 14th, 1900, a meeting of 2,000 men took place. Mr. Bell was among the speakers, and said in his speech that they wanted in the agitation "men of sound calibre, men with backbone, not jelly-fish. Their movement must be a united one." "It was a council of war," said one speaker.

On March 11th, at Park Hall, Cardiff, they again met to consider the replies of the four companies. A resolution was moved to the effect that the replies were unsatisfactory and that a ballot be taken. An amendment accepting what was offered as an instalment was proposed. To this Moses Jones replied that they wanted no milk-and-water patriotism. Mr. Bell, in his speech, said: "To-day they would have to prove of what metal they were made. For his part he was now in absolutely fighting mood. Were they going to be fools any longer?" Up to this point Mr. Bell's remarks had been of a fighting character, but when he found the low percentage of men in favour, as disclosed in the ballot above, he cried off. One of their own prophets moved at the E.C. that they "deprecated the result of the ballot, and regarded it as a retrogressive move, reflecting no credit on those affected." The Press, especially the railway Press, rubbed salt in the wounds, ridiculed the movement, sought to show that South Wales was the cockpit of the United Kingdom for railwaymen's alleged

grievances. Sundry mutterings were heard in the ensuing weeks, until July, when the signalmen held a meeting, and later sent a demand to the Taff Vale, requesting a reply before August 5th, and so, while the G. E. was in ferment, the Taff Vale was also agitated, and on August 19th, at midnight, 363 signalmen who had handed in notices struck work.

The Cardiff Chamber of Commerce had intervened with an endeavour to avoid a stoppage. The signalmen had taken the bit in their teeth and, against advice and without the society's consent, struck work. It was a precipitate move. It was a difficult situation. To let them proceed in a strike by themselves was, the other grades knew quite well, certain to bring defeat. They had not been consulted, and so had not given notice. They were less inclined to condemn the signalmen than to strike. It was a question of daring to do what they thought required to be done, and, right or wrong, they did it, and made the strike general. The signalmen's notices expired on the 20th of August. Out of 222 drivers and super-drivers, two drivers only and twenty-two super-drivers gave notice to expire on the 26th of August, three more had given notice to expire on the 27th and 28th, but from this 222 only twenty-one of them went to work on Monday, August the 20th. There were 206 firemen and thirty-six passed firemen, none of whom went to work on that date; 171 firemen having given notice to expire on the 26th, as had all but four of the passed firemen. The same applies with varying times to other grades, except such as had given no notice at all, but struck work with the rest of them. Had all notices expired on the same day there had been no breach of contract to have ceased work on that day. The evil of the case was they had struck without authority, nor had they taken counsel among themselves before declaring war.

A special meeting of the E.C. had been called for Sunday, the 19th August, when two of the Taff Vale men appeared as a deputation. The E.C. had before them a resolution and an amendment, both of which condemned the men; but the amendment, in addition, ran: "We, as administrators of the society, decide that every effort be made by the General Secretary and others we may appoint to bring the dispute to a speedy termination; we further, after careful consideration, decide to support them financially." This amendment, against the advice of the General Secretary, Mr. Bell, was passed by seven to five, and so authority was given to conduct and to finance the strike, bringing the society within the scope of illegality. It is impossible to conclude other than that the signalmen being incensed at the treatment of the company to one of their representatives, Mr. J. Ewington, of Abercynon, allowed passion rather than a calm deliberate judgment to sway them. Their act would only have been rendered justifiable by success. Mr. Ewington, in March, 1900, had been one of a deputation to the company on behalf of his grade. On April 28th, during a time of illness, he was ordered to remove from Pontycynon to Treherbert at what was understood to be an advance of 1s., but which turned out to be 2s.,

his wages at Pontycynon being 24s. per week. He asked to be allowed to remain at his old box, for the reasons that he had ten children, the oldest being 16, his wife was in delicate health, brought about by a son being killed on the railway; her mother and father living near were rendering assistance to the invalid wife, which would cause expense, if he moved to Treherbert, and even then would not be so well rendered as by her own relatives. Directly after this Ewington fell seriously ill, was away from duty from May 10th to July 24th, during which time another man had been appointed to his box, and he was offered a post at Llynypia. The matter then passed from a personal into a grade question, and the men decided that Ewington should decline the offer. On August 11th three of the Taff Vale directors met to hear the complaints of a deputation—Ewington, Williams, and Eustace. They offered Ewington a relief signalman's post, which he could have worked and live at Pontycynon, and which, they contended, removed the domestic difficulty, but it would have involved walks of two or three miles to some boxes of a morning. Much was made of the fact that Williams and Eustace, in reply to the directors, thought the offer they made was fair, and would recommend him to accept it, but they thought he would only relieve Penrhiwierber and Pontycynon, whereas it was the whole of the Aberdare district. Mr. Ritchie, of the Board of Trade, being appealed to, thought that, though Ewington had cause for complaint of the original action of the company, this removed it, but the signalmen, who would be content with nothing less than the original position, held a meeting at Pontypridd on July 29th, and, after Ewington had spoken, passed a resolution calling upon the company to reinstate him within seven days to his original position, failing which notices were to be signed and submitted not later than Monday, August 6th.

The strike took place. Listening, as the writer did, to the evidence at the trial of the charges which the Taff Vale brought against the society, the judgment is that it was the best piece of picketing that was ever done—best, that is, in organisation—because deeds were done which the moralist must sternly condemn. During the progress of the strike, the Taff Vale Company applied for an injunction against the society, the General Secretary, and the Organising Secretary for picketing and molestation, and succeeded. In the trial the society appealed to have its name struck out on the grounds that it could not be sued in its registered name. Justice Farwell decided against us. The Court of Appeal reversed his decision, which the House of Lords, on appeal, restored. Southport and Liverpool No. 1 also obtained an injunction restraining the Trustees from spending money in Holmes' defence, and so in the defence Holmes was dissociated from that of Mr. Bell and the society. An agreement was come to with the Taff Vale Railway Company that they would, on the men returning to work, cease further prosecutions, which was understood to mean those in which the men were summoned for breach of contract, and stop all litigation. They, however, proceeded against the society, and,

after a trial which lasted from December 3rd to 19th, 1902, the jury unanimously decided against the society. A settlement by consent was arrived at, the society paying the Taff Vale Railway Company £23,000 in satisfaction of all damages and costs, the money to be paid March 23rd, 1903. The total cost to the society was £41,892 14s. 9d., a costly lesson. The brief history of the Holmes defence is seen in the souvenir of Cardiff A.G.M., 1906.

No sooner was the decision given than a perfect jeremiad went up from all quarters of Trade Unionism, which would seem to portend that the end of Trade Unionism had come. A series of decisions had been given, which, one after another, struck at cherished opinions and the power of Trade Unionism. Capitalists were gleeful. Trade Unionists sorrowful, but such of them "who had failed and still fought on" before that, at once set forces in motion to restore what was thought pre-existing rights. A Bill was prepared by Labour, one by the Government. The Government thought its own Bill the best, but agreed to amend it in order to satisfy Labour. The Bill passed the House of Commons, when Labour asked, not without anxiety, knowing full well the history of that other House, "What will the Lords do?" With very wry faces "our old nobility" passed it, not because they loved it, their feeling being one of intense hatred, but because it was not considered politically judicious for party sake—such violent partisans are they—to provoke an untimely conflict with Labour. These decisions, which had eaten their way into combination, were at an end; the *status quo* was restored.

One of these Jeremiahs was Frederic Harrison, a lawyer, and life-long friend of Trade Unionism. In the "Positivist Review," September 1st, 1901, he expressed his view in an article headed "The End of Trade Unionism." He contended that the Taff Vale case and the Irish case of *Quin v. Leatham* had so crippled Trade Unions that to enter into strikes at all was dangerous, and that the new weapons in the industrial war would be to "smash up" the great Trade Unions of the country. Harrison was the chief defender of the Trade Unions in the inquiry given in the early pages of this book, and was perhaps the great outstanding personality that defended them and assisted in giving them legality, and he thought that his great work of enfranchisement and freedom lay in ruins.

George Howell, one of the three dominating personalities in the 'sixties onwards, the author of several Labour books, and a pronounced foe of what had been called "The New Unionism," on which he had written a book, was also among the descendants of Jeremiah. He wrote an article in the "Co-operative Wholesale Society's Annual" consisting of twenty-two pages, afterwards published as a pamphlet. "The Taff Vale Case: Its History, its Gravity, and its Lessons" was given in thick, black strokes.

Yet another was Fred W. Evans, the ex-General Secretary of the A.S.R.S., whilst he was Editor of the "Liberal Labour Journal," which was published as a penny pamphlet of twelve pages. He referred to

the attacks of the "Times" and other Government organs, showing a conspiracy and malignant misrepresentations against Labour and Trade Unions, which he contended performed a great social and provident work for the community, moulding character and inculcating love of liberty and equality more than any other agency in the world. He humorously suggested that Freemasons traced their craft to the Tower of Babel and Solomon's Temple. Ransacking the ages, he went through the industrial revolution and the charters of Labour to 1871, with the original intention of that Act, till he came to the Taff Vale case, which was a peril to the funds of a Trade Union and the liberty of individuals. The germs of the strike of 1900, he considered, were in the strike of 1890, and he very fairly and clearly defined what had happened through the men and by the law. And this is the time when we cast "one longing, lingering look behind" to the last of his utterances in the writer's possession: "There is other legislation which Trade Unionists would welcome, such as relate to cheap transit, the opening of waterways, the taxation of land values, royalties and way-leaves to be State charges, land allotments, housing facilities, old age pensions, employers' liability for accidents, education controlled by the people, licensing reform, prevention of gambling in the essentials of life and trade, manhood suffrage, the payment of Members and election charges, and the second ballot. Let but true Liberalism and earnest Labour go hand in hand and progress in these matters will be assured. The dishonouring policy of later years shall be superseded by honest efforts for the people's welfare, guided by a love of freedom and a sense of justice." To tick off what we have attained will enable us to see how far we have gone since this utterance. It also shows that he remained a Radical to the end. We can write the epitaph upon his deeds. With all his faults, he was a great personality, and the present generation owe him an incalculable debt. Honour his deeds by work for posterity.

The following is extracted from the Cardiff A.G.M. Souvenir, 1906 :—

Looking back upon the Taff Vale dispute and the momentous legal decisions which followed, we realise that the failure of the strike produced results far more beneficial and widespread than its success could possibly have accomplished. That which in 1900 appeared to be a serious disaster, has since proved to be a blessing in disguise. The Taff Vale dispute and decisions are indelibly stamped upon the history of Trade Unionism, and have done more to educate the rank and file of the workers to the economic necessities of their position than any previous decisions in history. The exigencies of space prevent a review of many interesting points connected with the strike, and as most of our readers are doubtless familiar with its main features, we pass on to brief details of an interesting sequel to the dispute, which claims attention here, viz. :—

HOLMES' DEFENCE.

The Executive Committee, at an early stage of the Taff Vale action against the society and its officers, found that they could not defend

Mr. Holmes. It, therefore, became necessary to move locally to provide the defence which was generally accepted he so richly deserved. On the 15th July, 1902, a meeting was convened at the Maskell's Hotel, Cardiff, which was attended by about a dozen local Trade Unionists, including Mr. Alderman John Jenkins, Councillors Crossman and Chappell. It was there decided to make an appeal to the Trade Unionists of the country in his behalf, when about 2,500 circular letters were sent out to which response was made to the tune of £436 0s. 4d.

The Secretary and Mr. Harley Downs, the solicitor, attended the A.G.M. held at Swansea in October, 1902. A special meeting of the delegates was held in the Liberal Club, presided over by Mr. Pickering, of Newcastle. Here Mr. Harley Downs made bold to state that he could not proceed with the case on mere guarantee, but must have cash in hand before he could engage counsel. Mr. Councillor Thomas, of Swindon, suggested that £700 be at once raised and that the whole of those present become guarantors for the sum mentioned. This suggestion was generally approved, and a committee of five, viz., Thomas Williams (Swansea), Charles Loxton (Long Eaton), J. Palin (Bradford), Councillor M. Hopkins (Swansea), and Councillor James Thomas (Swindon) was appointed to raise the sum named. This Committee lost no time in getting to work, for on the same evening the names of several gentlemen were suggested, with whom the Secretary was instructed to communicate on the telephone in the morning (the 10th October). At 12 noon of this day Mr. Brynmôr Jones, M.P., met the committee by appointment with a view to assisting in the matter. The Secretary reported that he had been in communication with Mr. D. A. Thomas, M.P., by telephone and had arranged an interview with him for the committee on the following morning, 11 a.m., at his Cardiff Exchange Office.

Preparatory to meeting Mr. Thomas, the solicitor drew up an agreement, which was signed by 51 of the members and friends attending Congress, guaranteeing the repayment of the £700.

On Friday morning, the 11th October, the committee above named, less Mr. Councillor Morgan Hopkins, who was substituted by Mr. Thomas Steels, of Doncaster, waited on Mr. Thomas at his Cardiff office. After the members of the committee had explained the position, Mr. Thomas agreed to loan the sum necessary for three months free of interest.

On the appointment of this committee, the local committee, previously referred to, became inactive and dissolved.

The members of the now existing committee, in consequence of the distance that separated them and the cost of coming together, decided to leave the appeal in the hands of the Secretary and report as may be necessary.

When the adjourned Congress was held in Holborn Town Hall, London, the Secretary and Councillor Thomas, of Swindon, attended in order to report to the guarantors as to the position and consider with

them how best to abridge the obligation (the amount borrowed from Mr. D. A. Thomas being due on the 10th of January). On Tuesday, the 6th of January, a meeting was held in the Holborn Town Hall, when it was decided that the Secretary, Mr. Thomas, and Mr. Loxton confer with the General Secretary and the President, with a view of borrowing the sum of £460 from the A.S.R.S. The net result of such conference was that the Secretary and Mr. Thomas, together with Mr. Pilcher and Mr. Hewlett, interviewed the society's solicitor (Mr. Brewer), as to the legal position if the £460 were loaned. Mr. Brewer in effect replied: "That the rules of the society would not permit of such loan being made."

We were now given to understand that the Executive of the Associated Society was sitting, and the following telegram was ventured upon them: "Holmes Defence Fund Committee appeal for assistance, legal difficulties prevent Congress making a grant or loan. Previous loan repayable to-morrow. Wire result of your decision," to which the following reply was received: "Wire amount to be made up.—Fox." This information having been given, the following welcome telegram was received: "Cheque for full amount posted now, with conditions following."

The cheque for £450 and conditions were received the following morning. The conditions were that the Executive made a donation of £50 and loaned £400 free of interest. No time stipulated for the repayment. This enabled the repayment to Mr. D. A. Thomas when due (January 10th, 1903), but to suit his convenience, and to enable the Committee to attend and thank him personally, this was not done till January 19th. It was decided at a meeting held on Friday, January 9th, that a prize drawing be got up to assist in extinguishing the liability, which realised £222 11s. 11d. In the meantime, the appeals already made to trade societies, Trades Councils, etc, were responded to, thus enabling the repayment of the £400 to the Associated Society. The total amount received from all sources was £1,172 11s. 6d. The expenses, including printing, postage, travelling expenses of Committee and Secretary, together with Secretary's loss of time, amounted to £172 11s. 6d. The solicitor's bill of costs amounted to £1,825 13s. 11d., but by an agreement arrived at when the action commenced he received only £1,000.

The accounts were duly audited by Councillor Morgan Hopkins and Thomas Williams, of Swansea, whose certificate appeared in the "Railway Review," September 11th, 1903, terminating a phase of industrial strife initially fraught with unpleasant possibilities, and likewise marking general appreciation of the sterling qualities of the central figures."

Other work did not stay whilst this was going on. In September, 1900, the following resolution was passed with one dissentient: "That having regard to the very large number of movements applied for from all parts of the country and from every grade represented in this society, and the diversion of opinion expressed in

such applications, we assert that we cannot henceforth entertain any applications unless they embrace, so far as hours are concerned, any one or the whole of the following, viz. : Ten hours or eight hours per day, time and a-quarter for night work, time and a-half for Sunday duty, every day standing by itself, and a guaranteed week. The question of wages be left open for decision of any local body who shall decide thereon, according to the price of labour in the particular and respective district; but in order to give this concentration a fillip, we ask the A.G.M. to express itself hereon by a further resolution."

This was unanimously resolved :—

" That it be an instruction to those having charge of movements sanctioned by this Committee, according to rule, that the programme submitted to the companies shall be identical with and contain no other items than the copy submitted to the General Secretary (Rule 16, clause 7), otherwise the consent of the Executive will be considered as withdrawn from the movement."

The directors of the N. E. having expressed a wish for conciliation, the E.C. passed this :—

" That, with respect to the proposal for the formation of a Board of Conciliation made by the directors of the North-Eastern Railway in December last, and the repeated applications in support of the same from branches on that railway, we decide to take a ballot of the men with a view of ascertaining whether they are favourable to the formation of such a board or not; voting papers to be issued early, and to be returnable to this office in time for the next meeting of this Committee. Branch officers are requested to use every effort to obtain the votes of the men, and, in the case of large branches, to appoint small committees for the purpose of more effectually performing the work."

The E.C. expressed themselves in a stiffening attitude in another resolution to a recalcitrant branch :—

" That this Committee very much regret to learn the attitude of some of the branches—the Newcastle City in particular—towards our Resolution No. 48 of September sitting, having reference to the Conciliation Board ballot, and disapprove of the act of circularising branches anent the same. We desire to place on record, for the guidance of branches and members, that when instructions are issued by this Committee it is intended that they shall be carried out in their entirety. We would add, so far as the N. E. ballot is concerned, the whole of the men affected by the altered conditions as arising from the establishment of such a board must be ballotted, whether or not it shall be advocated and sought."

" That as the ballot up to the present indicates that a very large number of the men employed on the N.E. are favourable to the formation of a Board of Conciliation, we decide to extend the time when the ballot papers shall be returnable until January 28th. For the purpose of making the object of the ballot clear to the branches and members,

the General Secretary be instructed to issue a circular on the subject. We further decide that a conference be sanctioned to consider the result and also, if deemed necessary, to prepare a scheme and appoint a committee to carry it forward. The conference shall also be empowered to consider what steps can be taken to improve the organisation on the N. E. R. The representation at the conference shall be as follows: Branches with 100 to 400 members one delegate, over 400 members two delegates; branches with a membership below 100 to be grouped, and one delegate allowed for every 400 members."

The vote taken for a Conciliation Board was: For, 5,485; against, 145.

The mineral guards of the N.E. threatened to strike, though warned by the E.C. not to do so. So Bell went to Newcastle on Sunday, December 16th, and persuaded the men to return to work and give legal notice. At Gateshead he had a hostile reception, and the men decided to cease work at midnight, but by a very small majority, and after an interview with Mr. Gibb the men returned to work. The strikers totalled 1,033, of whom 222 were non-members.

This had been altogether an eventful year. In his report for the same year Mr. Bell said: "We are still forging ahead, both in numbers, wealth, and vitality, hence our usefulness is still on the increase," and moralising on experience, he said: "Experience is a stern but just teacher; but if its true lessons are taken to heart what will it not accomplish? It is a staff which will help the worker on, even amidst the surroundings of intolerable conditions. It acts as a telescope, which will reveal to us the dark spots in our conditions of service. It is an indicator to show us where our true interests lie and the path to obtain them. It is a scar which tells of the troubles gone through in the battle of life. It acts as a lighthouse that at all times warns us of the treacherous rocks and quicksands of premature and hasty actions."

In this trope of figures we have to read "Taff Vale." "What we want to do," he continued, "is to consolidate our ranks and concentrate our desires, if we are to be successful in our efforts to ameliorate the conditions of our fellows." Then a brief reference to his entrance into Parliament, he concluded: "Incentives to the members and inducements to non-members are to be found in our twenty-nine years' records and achievements; these should urge us to still greater effort on behalf of the many thousands engaged in railway works, and thus elevate and brighten their lives. Let us inscribe on our banner: 'Protection for our labour; defence of our comrades; succour for the aged and infirm, the widow and orphan.' Let the question go forth—

"Shall few gather countless riches,
With imperious greed unblushing,
While the progress that contents them
Is unnumbered thousands crushing?"

Perhaps in no year had the lights and shadows played so moving a part as in this; victories and defeats take hold of each other, hopes

and fears mingle, effort and failure strive for mastery, grim determination sits upon Labour, baffled and driven back here and there, it sets its teeth and goes on, brushing aside obstacles, surmounting by heroic efforts the thickly-strewn difficulties, paying for its follies in failures, dipping hands into experiences, and finding maybe safety's pathway and success. For good or ill, the leaves of its history are written fairly complete. We leave them and reach forward.

During the year Mr. Linaker, a district superintendent, had been successful in a libel case against the "Review," and obtained damages for £1,000. The action arose out of a letter published in the "Railway Review" by one who signed himself "George Washington." After the case had been settled, the L. & N. W. Company either dismissed or shifted to other parts of the country all those who had given evidence in the case. On April 22nd, 1901, Sykes, Davies, Harvey, Ward, Bullock, and Hindle were ordered to the board-room at London Road, Manchester. The men were called in separately, served with dismissal notices, and given a week's wages. Later, two other men were dismissed, whilst some were removed to other parts. The men petitioned the directors to be heard, whilst Mr. Bell wrote and interviewed Members of Parliament and others, amongst whom was Colonel Lockwood, M.P., one of the company's directors, who wrote Mr. Bell:—

"The reason given by the board for the dismissal of these men is that the board are of opinion that the men combined unfairly to obtain the dismissal of their superior officer on false charges, and this deduction the board draw largely from the summing-up of the case. But in response to the wishes of the men, who have asked for an interview with the directors, the latter have agreed to grant them one next week."

The late Member for Crewe, Mr. J. Tomkinson, also wrote the company's officials about the excitement at Crewe and Stockport over the dismissals, adding that he had been invited to take the chair at an indignaion meeting, but had declined on the good old principle of *Audi alteram partem*. After reciting the facts of the case, he added: "This can't be true, I'm sure." Lord Stalbridge replied in a lengthy letter, in which (*inter alia*) he said: "To pass over a matter like this would, I need harly say, have been subversive of all discipline." Mr. Bell counselled patience to the men, and writing in reply to Lord Stalbridge revealed the hollowness of the company's case, giving the true inwardness of it all, and showing that of the twenty-six subpoenaed to give evidence, all, with two exceptions, had clear records, so disposing of malice on the men's part. Only two men knew of the letter being written, and all gave evidence with reluctance. Mr. Bell suggested that the author of the letter signed "George Washington" should acknowledge authorship and facts, to show the innocence of the others. Mr. A. H. Sykes, in a straightforward, manly letter, gave all the facts of the case, and acknowledged the authorship, but it made no difference in any one case. It did, however, work a reformation in the district; the price was heavy perhaps, but it was worth it.

The whole proceedings reveal the farcical aspect of inquiries, official adjudications, and directorate appeals. No impartial judge or jury would have convicted any one man other than Sykes. To appeal from officials to directors is useless, and may even reveal the truth of the adage that to do so is to appeal from "Phillip sober to Phillip drunk." The case reveals what methods are employed by railway officials, how hopeless an appeal is, and how helpless men are. Members, and also non-members, had grants made to them, so satisfied were the body of railwaymen who formed the Executive of the injustice meted out to them. The whole cost of the case to the society was £4,742 6s. 4d., in addition to £545 granted to the men.

During December, 1901, the E.C. decided to take a ballot of the members *re* the question of paying a levy of 1s. per annum per member for the purpose of sending Labour representatives to the House of Commons, as it was absolutely necessary that Labour as well as Capital should be represented, the members being asked whether they were in favour of 1s. levy or not. They were also requested to vote for or against federating with the General Federation of Trade Unions, the contributions and benefits being appended. In the light of after events it will be advantageous to give the Scrutineers' report in full of the result of the voting on both questions:—

"To the President and Members of the E.C.

"Gentlemen,—In accordance with the instructions of the December meeting of the E.C., we have duly scrutinised and counted the votes recorded on the question of joining the General Federation of Trade Unions and the payment of a levy of 1s. per annum for increased Parliamentary representation, and have to report as follows:—

GENERAL FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS.

Branches.	No. of members.	In favour.	Against.	Total.	Spoilt papers.
England	49,208 ...	9,309 ...	4,439 ...	13,748 ...	119
Ireland	1,639 ...	173 ...	179 ...	352 ...	2
Scotland	3,506 ...	429 ...	466 ...	895 ...	1
	<u>54,443</u>	<u>9,911</u>	<u>5,084</u>	<u>14,995</u>	<u>122</u>

LEVY FOR INCREASED PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION.

Branches.	No. of members.	In favour.	Against.	Total.	Spoilt papers.
England ...	49,208 ...	13,173 ...	1,512 ...	14,685 ...	98
Ireland ...	1,639 ...	354 ...	31 ...	385 ...	2
Scotland ...	3,506 ...	712 ...	201 ...	913 ...	2
	<u>54,443</u>	<u>14,239</u>	<u>1,744</u>	<u>15,983</u>	<u>102</u>

"The percentage of members of the society who voted on payment of a levy for Parliamentary representation was 29 per cent.; of these 89 per cent. were in favour and 11 per cent. against.

"ALFRED MOSS, } Scrutineers."
J. MOUL,

It was unanimously resolved by the E.C.: "That in view of the small percentage of votes cast on the question of federation, and the divided opinion expressed thereby, we decline to take any action thereon, but refer the matter to the A.G.M. for consideration, without recommendation." On the question of Parliamentary representation, it was unanimously resolved: "That this Committee, although deeply regretting that the members have shown such a lack of interest in the question of a levy for further Parliamentary representation, express our satisfaction that the ballot reveals such a large majority in favour, and we decide to appoint a Sub-Committee for the purpose of drawing up a scheme for consideration at our June sitting, and, if approved, the same to be considered at the A.G.M., as we feel that this course will materially assist our members for further considering this important question." A Sub-Committee of five, with President, was appointed to draft a scheme. They did so, presenting it at the June sitting. The subscription was to be 1s. per annum, the fund kept separate, the elected members of Parliament to have £300 per annum and third-class railway fare to and from their constituencies. Mr. Bell, in his report to the 1902 Congress at Swansea, said: "It is inevitable that Labour representation will continue to grow. It is Labour's reply to the apathy, indifference, or opposition of the ordinary Member of Parliament upon those industrial and social questions which so vitally affect the interests of those who venture to oppose it."

At this Congress the following was passed: "This Congress regards with considerable satisfaction the growing desire of the organised and other working classes for direct Parliamentary representation, and would urge upon the whole of the members the desirability of supporting, financially and otherwise, the Executive Committee of this society in their recommendation to obtain Parliamentary representation."

At the Swansea Congress also a committee was appointed to draft a scheme of Labour representation, which they submitted to the Special General Meeting on January 5th, 1903. This the meeting accepted, and agreed that the principal points be embodied in the rules.

At the Peterboro' Congress, 1903, Messrs. Hudson, Holmes, and Wardle were approved as candidates in addition to Mr. Bell. The stages of what afterwards led to acute differences are as follow: Early in 1904 a by-election took place at Norwich owing to the death of the Conservative Member, Harry Bullard, the brewer, in which contest there was a triangular fight between the orthodox parties and Mr. G. Roberts, a compositor. Previous to this the organs of the Labour Party had been tilting at Mr. Bell; branches in our society also regarded with disfavour certain of his actions. He received an invitation to go to Norwich to speak for Roberts, the Labour candidate, to which he replied that he regretted that no arrangements had been made to avoid splitting the Progressive and Free Trade vote, and feeling so strongly against Chamberlain's fiscal proposals he would be no party to anything

likely to be in his favour. After the election he wired to Norwich that the result of the Liberal success was a triumph for progress. In addition to these things Mr. Bell refused to sign the avowed constitution of the party, which had been made more stringent. At our Congress that year this resolution was passed: "That this Congress heartily appreciates the excellent work performed by Mr. Bell, M.P., in the House of Commons on behalf of railwaymen, and while admitting that certain of his actions may have been somewhat indiscreet, still we do not consider they are of such importance as to warrant a withdrawal of our confidence in him; and, further, that whilst we do not wish to sever our connection with the L.R.C., we consider its constitution too stringent, and that we submit proposals for a modification of its rules to the next annual meeting of that body; that Mr. Bell still act as at present without signing the constitution, and in the event of an election taking place he shall be allowed to stand as our representative on the same conditions as heretofore." It was passed by a majority of one in full Congress.

By thirty-six to eighteen the L.R.C. and T.U.C. were asked to recommend the four above-named Parliamentary candidates. By forty-eight to three they referred the revision of the L.R.C. to our E.C. These resolutions mirrored the opinion of that period. Mr. Bell had done excellent work in many directions; it was recognised alike by both sections as expressed in these votes. On the other hand, Mr. Bell was uncompromising in his views and actions; to hide his views would be to him to palter with eternal truths; not to act would be to be false to himself. Nor did he take the line of least resistance to those who disagreed with him; not content with parrying blows, he carried the war into their own camp, so, notwithstanding his gathering reputation as an excellent organiser, administrator, thinker, and man of deeds, his every action was an invitation to try conclusions upon.

At the March sittings of 1904 eight branches wanted a ballot of the members to decide whether they should remain affiliated with the L.R.C. or not. Seven branches asked the Executive to stop Mr. Bell's expenses till he pledged himself to the constitution of the L.R.C. Thirty-one branches approved of his actions generally. Mr. Shackleton and Mr. MacDonald interviewed the Executive over the Norwich episode. Small Heath Branch passed a resolution condemning "the continued and vindictive attacks on Mr. Bell; we further, do not consider it necessary for Mr. Bell to wear a Socialist label or declare himself a Socialist, which appears to be the cause of the attack. Mr. Bell's conduct in Parliament and also in political matters has our hearty approval, and we hereby thank him for the continued energy and ability he has thrown into the work."

Walthamstow had also passed the following resolutions:—

1. "That this meeting of the Walthamstow Branch view with indignation and alarm the extraordinary action taken by the E.C. re Mr. Bell's political policy, and call upon them at the next meeting



T. Watson.



W. Foreman.



J. Bermingham.



G.W. Brown.



J. Dobson.



P.J. Tevenan.

ORGANISERS

to rescind such a regrettable resolution and at once take a general vote of the society as to the propriety of remaining affiliated with the Labour Representation Committee, and further assure Mr. Bell of our heartiest appreciation of his great services on behalf of Labour, both in and out of Parliament, and trust he will continue to fight the tyranny of the Labour Representation Committee."

2. "That it be an instruction to the secretary to collect no more Parliamentary levies until the dispute re Mr. Bell's policy is satisfactorily settled.

3. "That this meeting hereby expresses its strongest disapproval of the regrettable action of Mr. J. H. Thomas, the E.C. man for the district, whereby he pandered to the deplorable tactics of the L.R.C. and made it impossible for Mr. Bell to stand for any constituency as the official candidate of the society."

This was an extraordinary resolution, but that it voiced the feelings with regard to Mr. Bell at that time is everywhere apparent; but, on the other hand, the condemnation of Thomas is equally against the sense of that time. Feeling ran high. The London Council discussed the matter, and in their findings contended that "independence did not mean isolation," and that in the world of politics it was absolutely impossible, and Clark, of the West Brompton Branch, was the herald of that view. The members were also incensed that Shackleton and MacDonald should interfere at all in what was purely a domestic matter; that we were capable of ordering our own house, shaping our own policy, controlling our own officials. The strife was keen and bitter, and resolutions from the branches agreeing with and contradicting one another came by shoals to 72, Acton Street.

The "Clarion" and also the "Labour Leader" had been hounding Bell, as if acting on a plan that if they could down Bell, the one hard-hitter, the one resolute man that withstood them, they would sweep the field. The year before, in a very lengthy form, Bell had brought before the E.C. under the heading of "My Political Action," all the forms of both abuse and criticism, and he cited facts, gave speeches of J. Keir Hardie and others, showing how he had done the same thing; that all of them were united on one thing: that it was a duty to destroy the then Government, whatever came after.

All the Labour organisations, the L.R.C., and the Trades Union Congresses had declared that Chamberlain's fiscal policy was dangerous to the workman's hearth and home, and should be avoided as an irritant poison. Bell had called a meeting of his supporters at Derby, which had expressed confidence in him and condemned the tactics of his opponents. An amendment by the president of the Derby Coachmakers found only three supporters, and his own branch condemned his action. Bell contended that he had played a straight game, had been true to the ideals of Labour; and he showed that of all the resolutions of condemnation only one concrete instance was given by Liverpool—

during the Liverpool and Cleveland elections—and that was in reply to questions he had answered. Hardie had said at York: “We and Liberals have one object in common, namely, to turn out the present Government. No matter what are our motives, we are one in regard to that.” “That is what I have done,” said Bell, and nearly ninety branches, Walthamstow included, had sent resolutions approving his actions.

On the motion of Thomas and Taylor, it was unanimously resolved: “That, after carefully considering the many communications received, also the recent articles appearing in the ‘Clarion,’ ‘Labour Leader,’ and ‘Railway Review’ relative to the Parliamentary position of our General Secretary, we are of opinion that a serious misunderstanding has taken place in reference thereto. The policy laid down by our society is one of complete independence in so far as Mr. Bell identifying himself with any political party, a policy which in our opinion the General Secretary has not departed from, but whilst we recognise that his position as the chief officer of our society carries with it the influence of a large and responsible body of electors holding various shades of political opinions, it is essential that the utmost discretion should be used by him in furthering the candidature of anyone seeking Parliamentary honours; and further, would remind all members that to immediately rush into Press when a difference of opinion has arisen is not only calculated to injure the prestige of our society, but also damage our chances of retaining our representation in the House of Commons.”

Later circumstances changed, and Thomas changed. Knowing the feeling in the branches, and that all should know, even if they did not approve of all that was done at the interview with the E.C. later, a shorthand report was taken, which occupies sixty-seven pages of that E.C. report. At that meeting it was Thomas’ questions that were most searching. It was he who brought out the fact that Steadman and Will Crooks had refused to sign, and the views of Labour about free food. If he went at the invitation of a Liberal Association, would that be a violation? After other citations, he said: “That is the real difficulty we have to face.”

MacDonald did not answer it, only as regarded himself, and skilfully walked round the questions. Thomas also put another case, this time addressed to Shackleton, that either a Tory or a Liberal supported Bell on a motion affecting railway servants, but would not support such parties if they were interested in the cotton industry, for which Shackleton stood, finishing with: “Can you give me any concrete instance of any Liberal or Tory who would be prepared to support Mr. Bell on a motion because he was not interested in that particular industry, but at the same time support him on a motion because he was interested in that particular industry? Mr. Shackleton answered: “I do not know that I could.” So that whilst others put searching questions, those of Thomas were even more searching.

N. Rimmer, the present Organising Secretary for Ireland, made it quite explicit that he did not hold the views of either the I.L.P. or the S.D.F., but that he was for adherence to the constitution of the Labour Party, to which we were affiliated, that Bell was not independent, that he was acting in contravention of our rules, or the spirit if not the letter, and he did not allow his sympathies or feelings to influence him. It is Walthamstow's condemnation of Thomas that I am concerned with, and for that reason give his speech as under.

Mr. Rimmer moved: "That, after giving very careful consideration to the complaints from the L.R.C., together with explanations of the deputation from that body, along with the complaints from a large number of our branches *re* Mr. Bell's political conduct, especially in writing and wiring, advising and congratulating, the success of the Liberal candidate at Norwich as opposed to that of the candidate of the L.R.C., we regret that Mr. Bell should so far disregard the instructions of the governing body of this society, and thereby give cause for these complaints, which in our opinion are justified. Since it is Mr. Bell's conduct in his representative capacity, and not in any personal opinions he may hold regarding politics, that is taken exception to, we recognise that in writing, speaking, or by way of telegrams upon such a very important subject he wields the power of our society and not that of his own, and we call upon him to conform with the rules and constitution of an organisation with which we are affiliated, *viz.*, the L.R.C. This decision has been arrived at after giving Mr. Bell the opportunity, and having had his full explanations."

Below is 'Thomas' amendment, and as it became the finding for the E.C. and the ideas of what Bell should or should not do, both sides were at one. But this amendment was frankly an opportunist one, a tactical move, and that the highest court of the A.S.R.S. should itself determine the policy. It did several things. It put the supreme power in the supreme body, which, had the A.G.M. come to any decision contrary to the E.C., would have weakened E.C. authority. It also gave an opportunity for discussion, and decisions for the A.G.M. months ahead. It might allow passions to cool and reason take its place; besides this ruled out the domination of an outside authority. But it had a remarkable sequel. The whole Executive, probably because Thomas was the best opportunist and capable of defending their finding, practically left their defence to Thomas, who went to the London Council, as he did to other places, and defended their action, and at the London Council he had to face hostile opinion, but left them converted. Because it was the finding of the E.C. I give the speeches of mover and seconder, with their amendment:—

The President: I have an amendment here which is in the name of Mr. Thomas as mover and Mr. Loxtone as seconder. It is as follows:—

"That, having carefully considered the various communications, also the L.R.C. deputation, Messrs. Shackleton and MacDonald, relative to the general conduct of our General

Secretary to the L.R.C., also his refusal to sign the constitution, we extremely regret that this matter should have arisen, as this is not conducive to the formation of a Labour Group in Parliament, and doing an incalculable amount of harm amongst the rank and file of our members. We feel that a considerable amount of misrepresentation has taken place by parties outside the L.R.C. or this society, and which in our opinion is not a constitutional method of doing business, and whilst we recognise and appreciate the good work of Mr. Bell as an M.P., we consider his attitude during the Norwich contest most indiscreet, inasmuch that this body has repeatedly recommended our members to vote solid for Labour. With regard to his refusal to sign the L.R.C. constitution, we feel that our affiliation with any body necessitates a strict adherence to its rules, and in order that this matter, which is of such vital importance not only to our society but to the Trade Union world generally, may be finally settled, we ask the A.G.M. to say whether Mr. Bell shall run under any other auspices than the three candidates already selected, and which is now provided by Rule 13, section 4, which, until altered, is binding upon all."

I call upon Mr. Thomas to move the amendment.

Mr. Thomas: There is no member around this table to-day to whom this business during the past few months has cost more anxiety and worry than it has to your humble servant. As the mover of the resolution twelve months ago, I felt, when the question was continually cropping up again in the speeches of public men in the different Press reports, that probably this Executive would be called, as it has been to-day, to perform a very difficult and undoubtedly painful task. I bow to no one in my advanced thought and principles on this question, but I feel that we here to-day have a great and important consideration to weigh in the first place, and that is, to bear in mind that there is such a thing as statesmanship. We are here as representatives of the railway servants of the country. Mr. Bell, no matter what the decision of this Committee may be, is, so far as his connection with this society is concerned, perfectly safe. But you have to realise this, that those of us who have made the sacrifices which every man around this board has made on behalf of his fellow men only retain their positions under the companies which employ them by the strength of the organisation they are here to-day representing. Therefore, we are brought face to face with this question as to whether our first consideration to-day should not be to steer the ship, as it were, out of the troubled waters, and that is the object of my amendment. We have, as has already been well pointed out to-day, a grave difference of opinion existing amongst the rank and file of our members. A large amount of that opinion has been arrived at and a large number of their resolutions have not unhesitatingly been passed in ignorance of the true issues that we are here called upon to decide; but the fact that remains is that for this E.C. to take

extreme action one way or the other to-day would mean such a split in our camp as would be disastrous. It is on these grounds that I ask you as representatives to realise the seriousness of the question you have to determine—to realise for the time being your duty in this movement, your duty to the public—to the society and to the members who have sent you here to support them. Now it is not necessary for me to go into all the many details which have been raised to-day. No one disagrees more with Mr. Bell over the Stroud business than I do myself. Stroud is a place where not only have we very few members of our society, but a place which is beyond the locality I represent. Mr. Bell had to go through our station, where I am residing to-day, to address a political meeting. My own feeling and that of a large number of our rank and file is that more attention should be given to Trade Union matters than to going about addressing meetings on behalf of particular Liberal or Tory candidates. And we are stared in the face by the fact that in the society we have a large number of Liberal and Conservative members, and that, however much we may disagree with the position of Conservatives, the fact remains that even in our society they are an important factor. These Tory members have as much right to resent Mr. Bell supporting Radical Members of Parliament as Liberal members of the society would have to resent his going on Conservative platforms and supporting Tories. I realise that the arguments I am using are in favour of a distinct Labour group. I am in favour of the L.R.C. policy, but we cannot blind ourselves to the fact that even the deputation this morning showed that they themselves recognised that there were grave defects in their own organisation. Significant admissions which were made this morning prove conclusively that even they, although they had conscientious opinions in this matter and were conscientiously acting up to them, recognised that there was certainly need for reform even in their own body. Apart from that, I am one who distinctly believes in the necessity for a distinct Labour group. My amendment does this—and here I am coming to the crux of the whole business—it gives some opportunity to the members to say whether the three candidates we have already accepted and the constitution shall be separate and distinct from Mr. Bell, or whether Mr. Bell shall be separate and distinct from them. It gives you an opportunity to place a clear and distinct issue before the members, so that they will be able to digest the matter and instruct their representatives to the A.G.M.; and at the same time, as you are here to administer the rules of the society, it gives you a clear assurance that you are not violating the rules but acting up to them conscientiously, as they are laid down. Having made these remarks, I feel that it is not necessary to say anything further. I recognise the weakness of argument which it would be necessary to use in attempting to do anything by means of a policy of individual independent representation, but

at the same time I hope you will consider this subject thoroughly impressed with your position as representatives, and realise that anything you do to-day, unless you do it with a view to the wishes of the majority of the society, will have a tendency to split our ranks.

Mr. Loxstone: In seconding this resolution, I must say that I rise with great pleasure. I should like to emphasise what I said at the commencement about the anxiety of this particular question. I am sure no one has been troubled more about this question than I have. From the very commencement, when I heard of Trade Unions as Trade Unions taking up political action, I foresaw these dangers, and at the very initiation of this business I was one to oppose it tooth and nail. I could foresee that these difficulties which are now arising would of necessity take place. In coming to the question before us now I must add further to what has fallen from Mr. Thomas, that no one in this room or out of this room is more out of harmony with Mr. Bell than I am. In nearly all his arguments with reference to the success of Labour and its emancipation—all the arguments underlying the discussion so far as he is concerned—had been in favour of a particular individual attitude or of individual independence. He asked for that, but I contend that if Labour is to be benefited to any considerable extent it must be by organised independent action inside and outside the House of Commons. The drift of Mr. Bell's contention would be that any individual member is to be permitted to do as he likes, and that I cannot assent to. Unless you have a Labour group and adopt the principle of independence as an organised body—though I do not deny that some little good might be done by a different policy—yet I do not think that you would secure the measure of success that we have a right to expect. I have to look at this question in two different ways. First of all, as an advanced Socialist, connected with the Socialist organisations for twenty years; and I have had to ask myself, even after I was elected to the E.C., whether I could continue to act in an official capacity upon these political questions, or whether I should ignore them altogether and stand upon my own Socialist principles. I have had to ask myself questions bearing upon the success of our Trade Union organisation and its breaking up. I have had to ask myself whether it would strengthen the Socialist organisation, and I venture to declare that even the success of the Socialist organisation depends on the continued success of Trade Unionism. Therefore, in seconding this, which is advocating a moderate course, I do so with a view to keeping our own organisation as united as possible, feeling sure that in the end I shall be advancing Socialist organisation as well. The question, it appears to me, is this: Our organisation is affiliated to another organisation, the constitution of which our chief official cannot conscientiously sign. I entirely disagree with the speaker

who said that this question was put definitely before our members before they affiliated. I say it was never put definitely before our members at all.

Mr. Rimmer : I never said that.

Mr. Loxstone : Then it was the seconder, or, at any rate, I heard someone say it. The question of affiliation with the L.R.C. was dealt with by the E.C., on the motion of Messrs. Holman and Cheeseman, and never put definitely before the members at all, and that is the second reason why I second the amendment, so as to throw it back on the members so that they may be able to see the whole question before them and decide whether they will continue to be affiliated with the L.R.C. when our chief official cannot possibly sign its constitution. As to all these attacks upon Mr. Bell, I have done my utmost to put aside questions of personality, and I will not go into them, but I must say that I think it is one of the most ridiculous positions in which to place a man—to so place him that he cannot conscientiously carry out your wishes. In all our deliberations in future I hope that this one thing we shall keep constantly in front of us, namely, that to put either Mr. Bell or anyone else in a position which they cannot conscientiously follow out is to make them to appear ridiculous, and to expose them to the attacks of all these outside organisations. I say that the first thing we ought to do is to withdraw him from this ridiculous position to save him from the attacks of these individuals outside our organisation.

The President put the question, when there voted—

For the resolution : Dickinson, Rimmer, and Taylor. Rest of Committee against, except Arnold and Bartlett, who remained neutral.

For the amendment : All the Committee, except Dickinson, Rimmer, and Taylor, who voted against, and Arnold, who remained neutral.

The President : The amendment by Thomas and Loxstone is carried.

Mr. R. Bell : I think we should have things perfectly clear ; there should be no misunderstanding arising out of the amendment. In the event of a General Election taking place before the A.G.M., what will be my position ?

Mr. Dickinson : It was in view of that contingency that I voted for the resolution. If you decide the question now there can be no misunderstanding.

Mr. Taylor : I would ask if Mr. Bell's position is not this : That he is bound by the rule. On becoming a candidate will not he have to conform to the rules of the L.R.C. and sign the constitution of that body ?

Mr. Dickinson : That is what is understood.

Mr. Beardsley : I take it you are exactly as you were, Mr. Bell.

The President: No; it is a question. He wants information.

Mr. Taylor: The General Secretary has decided that himself. He has said that he will not sign the constitution of the L.R.C.

A Member of the E.C.: Say "Can't."

Mr. Taylor: Well, he has said that he "can't" sign the constitution.

A Member of the E.C.: The A.G.M. does not meet until October. It is believed in some quarters that a General Election is near at hand. Well, if it takes place before October what will be the position at Derby?

The President: That is for you to answer and not me.

Mr. Thomas: As the mover of the amendment, I say distinctly, as I said in moving the amendment, and which is provided word for word in the amendment, that we are not here to make rules. We are here to administer them. The rules settle the point now raised. I may disagree with the rules—

The President: Order, order.

Mr. Higgins: My idea is that the way of meeting this is laid down in rule and that the rule is binding. Therefore, in the event of a General Election taking place at Derby prior to the A.G.M. our General Secretary has power to refuse to stand.

The President (to Mr. Bell): You understand what the opinion of the Committee is?

Mr. R. Bell: I understand the opinion of the Committee is, that should a General Election take place before the A.G.M., then I am not to stand unless I sign the constitution. You have a definite answer to that. It is generally understood that I shall not be a candidate. I would ask this, and you can put it in the record: If I choose on my own or in any other way other than running as a candidate for the society would you object?

A Member of the E.C.: Yes.

Mr. R. Bell: If a General Election takes place before the A.G.M. then I am no longer a candidate—not an official candidate. But should I feel so disposed, and if I could get sufficient support to enable me to run in the Labour interest, could I do so? Would you give me permission to run as an unofficial member, not responsible to the society?

The President: That is a direct question by the General Secretary.

Mr. Dickinson: I don't think we can do that.

Mr. Thomas: I submit that the decision is taken regardless of anything else. We have now arrived at a decision according to rule. The next point is as to what is to be done in the event of a certain contingency which may arise. Mr. Bell says that he may desire to run privately—not to violate our conditions. Now I contend that it will be his duty when that contingency arises to call the E.C. together.

The President: If that is the answer, then it is an authority for him to summon the E.C. That would be good enough if it were the answer of the E.C.

Mr. Beadon: After hearing the statement by Mr. Bell, are we to understand that if he were to run for any constituency, not being adopted by us, or on behalf of this society, though he refuses to sign the constitution—are we to understand that he could do it, and that it would not in any way interfere with his duty in connection with the A.S.R.S.?

The President: If we passed a resolution, and the contingency did arise, Mr. Bell would then call us together.

Mr. Taylor: I would ask, in the event of the contingency arising, would Mr. Bell give us a pledge that he would call us together on the first Sunday or on the first day possible after he gets to know there is a General Election? We have to settle the position of Mr. Bell. I should explain the matter in this way: We do not want to be called here after he has been adopted as a candidate and after he is practically before the constituency—after his claims have been advocated and accepted like those of other candidates for Parliament.

The President: We do not want a speech, please.

Mr. Taylor: I am not making a speech.

The President: It is getting dangerously near it.

Mr. R. Bell: If a General Election takes place between now and the October A.G.M., under your decision I can no longer be a candidate?

A Member of the E.C.: Not a candidate as representing the society.

Mr. R. Bell: What I want to know is this: Could I be a candidate as a private individual? That is all that should be considered. Could I enter the constituency as a private individual, supposing the constituency agrees to accept me—to adopt me as candidate? Have I the authority of this E.C., or am I at liberty to run as an independent candidate? Of course, I should no longer be responsible to the society, and if returned should be an ordinary Member of Parliament like any other.

The President: I think the point put by Mr. Thomas very fairly meets the case. Let the contingency arise before any decision is arrived at. If there is a General Election decided upon then let the first opportunity be taken to call us together in order that the matter may be gone into.

Mr. R. Bell: I may not have any right unless this Committee says so.

Mr. Thomas: I will put it on record.

Mr. Loxstone: This is the point—that in the face of a dissolution of Parliament we shall be called together before anything has been definitely done. We must not be compelled, as it were,

when we meet, to accept that which is inevitable. We must not be called together simply to record an act which has already taken place.

Mr. R. Bell: The point is this—that unless you say I must do so, I shall not call you together at all. I should not run; there would be nothing done. I am asking you whether in the event of a General Election taking place between now and the October A.G.M., and I should not run, and should not be a candidate, you would allow me to run privately? You might say to me: “Why did you not call us together? If you had done, we could have considered ways and means by which we could have got over all the difficulties.” If you will give me authority it shall be done. This is a most important matter, and should not be left undealt with.

Mr. Rimmer: I don’t want it to be thought that I wish to shirk any responsibility in these matters, but I would ask this question, which seems to me to the point: Has this Committee any authority to do what you ask? According to a rule the A.G.M. is the authority to deal with these matters.

Mr. R. Bell: I think that this Committee also is the authority to some extent. The question is what amount of liberty are you prepared to give to any individual officer? If one of your district secretaries asks you that he may run for the position of Town Councillor or member of the Board of Guardians or anything of the sort, you can say: “We cannot spare you—we will not allow you the time—we will not permit you to stand.” On the other hand, you can say: “We will let you run if you like. That will not interfere with your duty as a secretary, or in any case as General Secretary.” But you have a right to say that. Can I do what I like with my spare time?

The President: This is more like something in the nature of an appeal to the A.G.M. Circumstances might arise between now and then to bring on the contingency before the thing has really been considered. It was with a view to dealing with the matter as it presents itself, as it arises, that it suggested that the E.C. should be called together.

Mr. Dickinson: May I not suppose that we have already by our decision embarrassed Mr. Bell’s position? It seems to me that we have jeopardised our chances of success in connection with an election in Derby.

Mr. Loxstone: We have the rules.

Mr. Dickinson: I am aware of that. It is illogical to assume that the E.C. after the resolution which has been passed has authority to deal with the matter, as Mr. Bell suggests.

The President: Are you discussing the thing? I have a resolution here: “That in the event of a General Election taking place previous to the A.G.M., Mr. Bell be authorised to call the

E.C. together to consider the matter.” This is in the name of Mr. Bartlett as mover, and Mr. Higgins as seconder.

Mr. Bartlett: I move the resolution. It will speak for itself. I do not wish to say anything in regard to it.

Mr. Higgins: I beg to second the resolution. My idea is that we have placed our General Secretary in a very awkward position. The event we are discussing is one which may not occur, but nevertheless it may occur, and if it does, he would come to us with this claim which he is putting forward to-day, and we, between this and the A.G.M., would have to define whether it would be judicious for him to act in a private capacity or not—without the decision of the A.G.M. That is the position of affairs.

Mr. Thomas: It is not we, and I personally repudiate that it is we who are placing Mr. Bell in this position. We have not done that.

Mr. Dickinson: Our decision has.

Mr. Thomas: But that is based on the rule that governs us. There is another contingency which, from the remarks of Mr. Bell, we may assume will probably arise. If this contingency occurs we then can be called together. Why we have arrived at that decision has been because we are here to administer the rules, and the rules bear upon the subject which we were called upon to deal with. The rules contemplate the spending of the society's money, and it is for the A.G.M. to deal with questions of the kind. The next contingency is one which should be considered separately and discussed separately. We have to decide on the merits of the cases as they arise.

Mr. Rimmer: I think we have already placed ourselves in a most ridiculous position by the resolution, or rather the amendment, we have adopted. I claim that neither the resolution nor the amendment is favourable to Mr. Bell taking the action which he now asks that he may take, that is to say, is not favourable to his having an opportunity of supporting either Liberals or Conservatives in the House of Commons.

A Member of the E.C.: If Mr. Bell stood privately it would have nothing to do with the society.

Mr. Rimmer: He would be using the society's name, and therefore it is a matter of principle. How could we allow him to stand and not pay his expenses, and not require him to act in our interests? How could he be in Parliament and we have nothing to say to his action or otherwise? It would be a most invidious position. We have already placed him in a most invidious position by the resolution we have passed, but I do not intend to go any farther in that direction. I shall vote against this.

Mr. Barker: Supposing a General Election takes place and that Mr. Bell is adopted as a candidate, do I understand you to signify that we allow him time to attend to the duties of a Member of Parliament?

The President: The intention is, if you desire it, of giving the General Secretary the opportunity of calling the E.C. together in the event of a General Election between now and the A.G.M., without, in so doing, mentioning any other subject for discussion. That is the position.

Mr. Barker: Quite so, but I think I understood.

The President: That is so.

Mr. Barker: But that was not the intention of the mover of the resolution. The resolution will be to that effect. We cannot give Mr. Bell the permission except on the ground of time. We cannot give him permission to put up for Parliament so far as the payment of his expenses is concerned. We can only give him the necessary time, if elected, to attend to his duties in the cause of Labour.

Mr. Taylor: But have we the power to make arrangements of this description? We are an E.C. body whose duty it is to administer the rules.

Mr. Rimmer: When we don't shirk them.

Mr. Taylor: But the present position is away from the rules and from the society altogether.

The President: No, it is not. Let me keep you right there. The resolution says that in the event of a General Election taking place before the A.G.M. Mr. Bell be authorised to call this E.C. together to consider the situation.

Mr. Taylor: But that does not make me out of order.

The President: Yes, it does.

Mr. Taylor: Allow me to consider the resolution as I think it right to consider it. With all respect to both the President and the E.C., I beg to say that every man has a perfect right to consider a resolution or amendment according to his own way of thinking.

The President (to the reporter): You needn't put that down.

Mr. Taylor: He can put it down if he likes. The position at present is perfectly lawful, and to take any other is unlawful. The amendment distinctly states that Mr. Bell, in the event of a General Election, must conform to the rule. Mr. Bell absolutely declines to do so as our candidate. So far as Mr. Bell is concerned, then (and this is where the construction comes in) he ceases to have any connection with the funds of the society in regard to his Parliamentary duties. (Hear, hear.) If we are called here to spend a Sunday discussing Mr. Bell's position we may find that we have to do it at our own expense, and, personally, I am not prepared to spend my railway fare and give a day of my time for nothing.

Mr. R. Bell: And perhaps have a night thrown in.

The President: The position is here. Do our rules define that we have power as an E.C. to do such a thing as to come to

London to consider the desirability of granting permission to the General Secretary to stand as an independent candidate for Parliament.

Mr. Thomas: On a point of order, Mr. President, can you explain what we are doing or we ought to do? There is nothing before the meeting as to what it is proposed to call the E.C. together for.

The President: That is my point. It is for the Committee to consider what it can do in the event of an emergency arising.

Mr. Taylor: Then I would ask you a question. On what grounds can the General Secretary call the Committee together?

Mr. Bell: On the resolution.

Mr. Taylor: What is that? What authority has the E.C. to pass a resolution.

The President: That is for yourselves to say.

Mr. Taylor: If we are going to have a resolution moved and to take a vote on it, and not discuss the *pros* and *cons*, what is the good of it? I still adhere to the view that I have a right to put my own construction on the resolution, and from my point of view it is proposed to adopt an illegal attitude, and I would, therefore, offer every inducement to the Committee not to pass the proposed motion. I am confident that it would be illegal.

Mr. Dickinson: The obvious purpose of this resolution is to call us together to decide—if a certain contingency arises—on a matter with regard to which we have no jurisdiction. It would be outside our province altogether to come up to discuss the matter in question. I consider that Mr. Taylor is logically right in his deduction. That is my view of the case, and I shall be bound to vote accordingly.

Mr. R. Bell: Have you the right to say that I shall not stand for Parliament in my individual capacity?

Mr. Beadon: I should be obliged to vote against it. What would be the good of coming here to give Mr. Bell permission to stand for Parliament when he says he is going to do it as a private gentleman?

Mr. Thomas: He does not say so.

Mr. Beadon: We are not in a position to grant him any funds or assistance from the society, neither is the society to interfere in any way. Mr. Bell has told us that under certain conditions he will put up as a private gentleman. I can see no rule which will enable members of the society to be paid for coming up to London to sit on the E.C. or to receive their expenses for a thing of this description. The thing appears to me to be quite illegal.

Mr. Loxstone: I rise to support it. I cannot for the life of me—

Mr. Higgins (interrupting): Look at Rule 3, clause 4, on page 6—dealing with the E.C. That may enlighten us a little.

The President : No ; I do not think it will.

Mr. Higgins : It gives power to call a special meeting. It does not say what for.

The President : The rule says : " The meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held quarterly at the Head Offices of the society. The President or General Secretary may summon a special meeting should one be necessary. In the event of the President's absence the Executive Committee shall appoint a chairman from among their members."

Mr. R. Bell : I should not call the E.C. together on my own. As to the remarks which have fallen from some members of the E.C., I would point out that they have no authority to say that I propose to run as an independent " gentleman," as Mr. Beadon puts it—and I put emphasis on the " gentleman." I did not say that. I would ask, has the E.C. authority to say that I shall not run for Parliament independently of the society?

A Member of the E.C. : Yes.

Mr. Loxstone : I rise with a view to support it. I will never be a party to saying that our officials have no private capacity. I disagree entirely with any such contention, and I say that because a man is an official we have no right to demand that all his time should be devoted to our service. Therefore, if he calls us together and asks us for a certain amount of liberty to do a certain thing I say we should be acting perfectly legally if we thought it wise to agree to it. Mr. Bell already has calls upon his time which are not directly affairs of the A.S.R.S. He is chairman of a quarry company, for instance, in Wales. Who can say but that we agree to his devoting time to the service of that company? And if we are asked to allow him to call us together to consider the granting to him of liberty for a further purpose, though he asks nothing from us in the form of expenses, I do not see that there is anything in the rule to forbid it.

Mr. Cody : It seems to me there will be a little difficulty about this. Suppose we agree to this and the General Secretary calls us together and we come to London on this matter, we may find that the Auditor will refuse to pass our expenses. He may say : " You came to consider Mr. Bell standing for Parliament in his private capacity, and we cannot allow the expenses of the E.C. for such a purpose." We should decide the point now without being put to the necessity of paying additional expenses. I for one have the strongest objection to our being mulcted in expenses out of our own pockets—and we probably should be, for this could not be called doing the society's business.

The President : Suppose Mr. Bell were to stand for Parliament without asking your permission, what would you say then? That is the point. You should look at the matter from all sides. Suppose Mr. Bell had an offer to stand as candidate for Derby—his expenses

being found and his candidature being in his private capacity, altogether outside the society—what would your decision be?

Mr. Bell: Would you say afterwards that I had no right to stand if I did stand without consulting you as an E.C.?

Mr. Taylor: Never mind what our position would be, the question is, what would be the position of our Secretary or any other member of the society? When we say that he can stand for Parliament and fix the conditions and he declines those conditions and will not stand under the rules? If we then came here to consider whether he should be allowed to stand without reference to the society, should we not be acting illegally, not only in allowing him to stand, but in coming here to consider the matter? I am asking a question, Mr. President.

The President: And you will answer it by resolution.

Mr. Dickinson: My view is that to ask the E.C. to give an opportunity for Mr. Bell to stand and act in his private capacity is wrong. You have no such power. We had far better let Mr. Bell run on the lines he was running on than attempt to do any such thing. We shall be stultifying ourselves if we adopt this proposal.

The President: Are you ready for the question? "Yes."

For: Arnold, Bartlett, and Higgins. Against: Rest of Committee, except Beardsley, Cody, Loxstone, and Thomas, who remained neutral.

On the motion of Barker and Beadon, it was unanimously resolved: "That a verbatim report *re* the General Secretary and the L.R.C. question be sent to all the branches."

The answer of the A.G.M. was as given, so that up to the end of 1904 Mr. Bell's actions were endorsed by the society.

During March, 1905, Walthamstow Branch reaffirmed their decision of 1904, and instructed their secretary to discontinue the levy, and accompanied the resolution sent with a lengthy covering letter, which finished with: "The National Anthem has never before appealed to us, but now we can enthusiastically shout—

"Scatter our enemies and make them fall,
Confound their politics,
Frustrate their knavish tricks,
God damn them all!"

The Executive then took counsel's opinion whether they could legally enforce the Parliamentary payment. The counsel consulted were Sir Edward Clarke and R. T. Reid, now Lord Loreburn, who gave us an opinion that the rules were not valid because they were not passed by an Annual General Meeting nor preceded by the specific steps required by Rule 19 of the pre-existing rules. Even had the rules been valid they did not think they were so expressed as to warrant expulsion of any member who declined to contribute to the fund. Even had the

rules been valid, six years must elapse before expulsion could accrue. They further thought Parliamentary representation was one of the things the society could take in hand if the rules were valid. New rules regularly made would make expulsion enforcible. Thereupon, the E.C. expressed regret at the matter not having been made legal by rule, and recommended that the agenda should contain the necessary proposed alterations of rules. A ballot was then taken with a view to ascertaining whether the contributions should be increased 3d. per quarter as hitherto. The total membership at this period (June, 1905) was 54,928. The members voting were 26,762. In favour of Parliamentary contributions being embodied in the rules, 21,713; not in favour, 4,825. Besides these votes, 171 in favour and 71 not in favour were disqualified.

This brings us to the Sheffield Congress, at which W. V. Osborne, the secretary of the Walthamstow Branch, was a delegate, as he had been at Swansea. The discussion here again does not emerge from the former complexity.

Mr. Watkins, of Toton, moved: "That the Conference accept the decision of the recent ballot, and agree to the principle of a levy of 3d. per quarter for the purpose of Labour representation being embodied in the rules."

Mr. Halls, Leicester, moved an amendment: "That the cost of Parliamentary representation be met out of present contributions."

Osborne spoke in favour of amendment for another purpose. Mr. Bell, taking part in the discussion, showed that at Doncaster, where this form of Parliamentary representation originated, the ballot gave a majority of only two in favour, Darlington thirty-seven against, Newcastle 152 against and 249 for, etc.

The resolution was carried by fifty-five to three. Another resolution was proposed, which Osborne seconded, in which he said, supporting the idea of the resolution against the alleged dictation of the L. R.C.: "Rather than that their members should be coerced, every resource of civilisation would be availed of, including application for legal injunction. Let them have Parliamentary representation as much as they liked, but let it be by and under the control of their own people." He also contended later that the resolution passed only affirmed a principle, and rules were not amended in amending form. And so, to follow this weary path to the end, a writ of summons was issued in October, 1907, declaring Rule 14, section 4, of current rules was not binding, and restraining the society from levying or distributing funds for Parliamentary representation. Lord Justice Neville found Parliamentary representation in the interest of its members was not *ultra vires*, and dismissed the action with costs against Osborne. An appeal was made, when the Court of Appeal unanimously decided against the society, which the society appealed against to the House of Lords, the Law Lords deciding in favour of Osborne.

Yet once more the pessimists had an innings, but new methods came with this finding, and secure means were found; electoral reforms grew out of it, which Osborne contended was the thing he aimed at. Whether he did so or not, they came.

Men with one aim, one policy, under a common bond, will take up and carry to completion the work Labour began and carried forward so well. Working men will be the bearers of their own message to the nation. What Labour needs will be done by Labour, and all the sounder and all the swifter and more complete, because Labour is one. When the decision was given there was a balance of £4,000 in the Parliamentary Fund. After the Lords' judgment it was felt that those who had been compelled to contribute by rule to the fund should voluntarily decide whether it should still go to the Parliamentary Fund of a voluntary association which had been called into existence as the result of the decision, be returned to the subscribers or diverted elsewhere. As soon as steps were taken to do this, Mr. W. Addison, a member of the Walthamstow Branch, took legal proceedings, which were meant to have the effect of diverting this from the Parliamentary Fund, his branch being of opinion that the balance of the fund should go towards paying the legal costs of the trial, which had ended. Addison was tendered and accepted the 2s. 9d. he had paid into the fund, whilst the E.C. expelled Osborne and Addison, at the same time dissolving the Walthamstow Branch. This was not the end.

During the concluding hours of the case, when the judgment was being delivered in the House of Lords, prominent individuals of various unions were standing at the entrance of the House, and when the question was put and answered—"The non-contents have it" and "That the appeal be dismissed with cost," they turned away, Osborne among them, he saying: "That is the end of the seven years' war."

The motives of the Walthamstow Branch in the action they took should be considered. Their view was that the society by itself should deal with all Parliamentary candidates. Osborne has placed before the public his view of the case in his two books—"My Case," a book of 116 pages, and "Sane Trade Unionism," of 264 pages. In the first book in its first chapter he outlines his case: "As I was always possessed of a natural yearning for peace, which at times almost attained the point of cowardice, it was no personal desire, but rather a combination of circumstances, that marked me out to carry forward the banner of constitutional liberty. In the first place, it was necessary that the man who took the action should for purposes of convenience and economy not only live in the vicinity of London, but should also belong to a London branch of a union that in turn had its headquarters in London. Moreover, he should have a long and active career in his union, which itself should be a prominent one with the system of political tyranny fully developed and causing widespread discontent. His membership, too, should date back to the days before the birth of the Labour Party. He should be in some official position, so as to have possession of documents issued by the society from time to time.

He would also need to be in employment, with much time free during the day. Security of employment would be a *sine qua non*, for his livelihood would be in danger in a trade open only to union men. Above all, he must be absolutely regardless of the misrepresentation and calumny sure to follow. All these favourable circumstances were present in my case. In addition, I was blessed with a wife ever ready to share my ideals and my work, whilst my presence on the Walthamstow Town Council could not fail to be of material assistance. . . . Fully a year was wasted after the fight was known to be inevitable, in the hope of making peace and establishing an honourable compromise whereby liberty might be preserved. But the opposition rendered this impossible. Intoxicated by their temporary success, they rushed to extreme measures, their watchword being: 'Minorities have no rights'; 'Conscience can have no existence.' Although I have been taught from earliest childhood to worship at the shrine of Liberty; yet devotion and enthusiasm were often sorely tried, and patience almost exhausted. During the three years that were to follow every effort was made on my part to treat the question of law in a friendly manner, but without success. In the end, as all the world knows, that which had seemed an impossible task was accomplished. Starting without organisation or funds, relying wholly upon the justice of the cause, the case dragged wearily on step by step, until at last I stood in the Gilded Chamber and heard from the highest tribunal of the land a judgment declared that henceforth the political liberty of the Trade Unionist member was guaranteed by the law."

It can hardly be said that Osborne was an active member of our union in the sense he seems to indicate here. He had for some years been an active member of the Social Democratic Federation, was a member of the G.W.R.U. till his reasoning led him to the fact that the A.S.R.S. was the union for railwaymen, and he joined the Stratford Branch of the A.S.R.S. He was not excessively active whilst a member there, and was of a lethargic temperament, and showed no brilliance of intellect; he was just an ordinary member, taking part in the delegacy of the branch. He was perhaps a too devoted worshipper "at the shrine of Liberty," too staunchly devoted to freedom, exalted personal liberty on too high a pedestal, and made a fetish of conscience. So much so that whilst employed at Hackney Downs he refused to work overtime, alleging that it was against principle, and had quite a battle with the G. E. over a system they had of drawing men when off duty to do work at Liverpool Street. He objected to it "on principle," but he had to submit or go, and he took up his duties. He had a sense of humour that must have sustained him in a long, arduous conflict. This was seen when he was a delegate to the London Council, which had censured Harford. Harford, coming to the Council, fought his case against them. Osborne then told them that previous to Harford's coming they were ready to stab him, but when he did come they almost fell on his neck and kissed him. It was seen, too, when his solicitor asked him for so many

hundred pounds to fight the case, he said that if he turned out his pockets he might find a few pence, but that sum was out of the question. And again when the appeal was made by the society to the House of Lords: "Not content with the judgment of the Highest Court of Commoners, they appealed to the Lords, the last refuge of the Socialists."

But generally, in a sentence, he went into the heart of a difficulty, sometimes lighting it up with a touch of sardonic humour. In the correspondence which followed the decision of the Court of Appeal, when he threatened Mr. Bell and the Trustees with an action charging them with evading the decision in the matter of Mr. Hudson, there is many a biting phrase. In controversy when passions are aroused truth is rarely honoured, and he was charged with taking money from capitalists. A member of his branch, a carman named Pipe, told the present writer that when the case had concluded Osborne gave to the branch an account of every individual subscription, and said that the money had come from workmen, not from the capitalist. Doubting such, I was shown some of them. One book (29s. 6d.) came from a lodge of the Durham Miners. He wrote in the public Press at that time:—

"Sir John Gorst, speaking at Whitefield's Tabernacle on Sunday last, asked the question 'Where did Osborne get his funds to purchase his celebrated judgment?' He then proceeded to answer: 'They were found by rich men and enemies of Labour.'

"It may be of interest to Sir John Gorst and your readers to know that I approached the Trades Union Congress, that being the highest authority in the Trade Union world, and offered to allow them to appoint some independent person to investigate the matter, and I undertook to submit such material as I thought would convince them that the action was *bona fide* and taken with no ulterior motive; that there had been no personal gain; and that the money transactions had been pure, and that there had been no person or body controlling the action other than my own branch. The letter was in the possession of the Congress whilst they were making the most abusive statements, and yet they dared not accept the offer because they knew that it would prove the *bona fides* of the movement. On September 23rd I wrote asking what decision the Congress had arrived at, and still pressing for the investigation, but my letter remained unanswered."

Two lengthy letters of Osborne's appear on pages 49-53 of the June E.C. minutes of 1908, in which he says:—

"As a most loyal member of the A.S.R.S., so far as the objects existed when I joined, I most willingly meet you in a frank and friendly spirit, for, notwithstanding the insinuation and abuse coming from the Socialistic brotherhood, there is nothing of a mysterious nature in connection with the four and a-half years' fight against political tyranny in which my branch has been engaged. My whole financial transactions are open for your inspection, and if you so desire I should

be quite willing to submit a statement at your next quarterly meeting, provided that the case is then settled."

Perhaps it was the ambiguous sentence at the end of the citation above that our E.C. did not agree to an examination of those financial transactions, but they did not, although they did pass a resolution declining an interview. He also wrote that he offered, when the writs were issued, "to attend at the General Office to see Mr. Bell and discuss the matter with him, thinking to clear away any misunderstanding, and to allow the matter to be conducted on a friendly footing. I was informed that he had no desire to see me, or words to that effect. Further, I obtained an order to make Mr. Bell file an affidavit of every document likely to be used in the action. He retaliated upon me in a similar way. I then got an order for 'discovery' and attended with my solicitor at your solicitor's office to go through the documents. I got leave of absence from duty, and my solicitor gave up a whole day to the work. After we had gone through them all my solicitor said: 'I suppose everything is here.' I remarked 'Yes, they would play straight,' but he decided to check them, and to our amazement we found two documents short. It was two hours before we could obtain any information about them, and then we were politely informed that they were of no value. We decided to attend at the General Office the next day with the solicitors on both sides, and then found that the missing documents were of the greatest value, being the legal proof of the payment to the Labour Party. When asked for an explanation they excused themselves on the plea that the documents were too large to send."

Osborne evidently attaches some importance to this, because in his brochure "*My Case*," page 28, the reference is italicised. Apart from this the matter found an echo in the A.S.R.S. Congress of 1910, when G. W. Alcock had to appear before that Congress for two of his sins, one of which was that he was a friend of Osborne; and Poplar Branch sought to remove him from his Trusteeship. Alcock attended and vigorously defended himself, saying that he held so many diverse opinions from other people that if he dissociated himself from every one that he disagreed with he would probably be without a friend in the world.

At the risk of using the personal pronoun, it will be as well to place facts on record. For some years Osborne was at the same station as myself, and for some years a lodger in my house. Knowing the man, though I disagreed with his actions in this matter, I always defended him from imputations of having a warped character. I knew him to be a man of probity and upright character, and whilst regretting his opinions and actions defended his moral character. He was a lodger with me up to the time of his marriage. The insinuation was, I suppose, that I had given him points, whereas no communication passed between us during these years, save when he thought we were evading the legal decision in the case of W. Hudson he wrote that he did not care to take action because of old friendships, when I curtly replied that he

need not consider me in the matter, and that he could act so far as I was concerned as if I did not exist. A silence was between us all those years. He was quite as candid with regard to me as I to himself, and said he thought whilst he lodged with me I was a splendid fellow to go about to meetings as I did without charging even my fare, whereas now he thought I was "a damned fool."

This was not the only case in which the Walthamstow Branch took action, and as in one of Osborne's books he brings the charge of corrupt action in a general form, the society, as distinct from branch action, should be vindicated in the matter.

The A.G.M. of October, 1908, had decided to appoint four local Organisers, and as Mr. Mear had retired through ill-health and all the others Organisers had refused to go to Ireland, that post was also vacant. For the Irish Office Mr. Rimmer was elected. There were seventeen candidates for the local Organisers. The vote for the first four was as follows:—

Bell (J. R.)	18,842
Unwin	10,525
O'Connor	8,894
Carter	8,411

Mr. Bell reported that he had received from Walthamstow Branch a communication which if true would lead to grave consequences, which was that some members had voted twice, the two branches being theirs and Stratford. He had gone through the voting papers and found that was so; and Mr. Bell used strong language. The books of the two branches were sent for, and it was found that for the Walthamstow Branch, which showed forty-two members at the end of 1908, twenty-two had voted for the General and Local Organisers. Compared with the contribution book, all were in order except R. Caunt and J. Mortlock, who had voted in both branches. Of Stratford, with 533 members, 416 had voted for the General Organisers and 472 for the local Organisers; four had voted twice in both, one twice for the General Organisers and one twice for the Local Organisers. Of those whose names did not appear in the contribution book there were ten for the General Organisers and twelve for the local Organisers. The E.C. endorsed the action of the Walthamstow Branch and disfranchised the Stratford Branch from voting in the second election, which went to a second ballot without J. R. Bell, who was declared elected. Of the eight contestants for the second ballot six went to the poll for the third time, when the following obtaining a majority of the votes cast were declared elected: Williams, O'Connor, and Carter.

The Stratford Branch took exception to its disfranchisement, and asked for a Committee from that branch to be allowed to investigate the papers, which was done, and a report was presented. They reported that the General Office facts were undisputed and indisputable, and that they had interviewed all concerned, in which forged votes appeared, men recorded as having voted whose names could not be traced in

the contribution book. Members of other branches included some who denied voting in Stratford, voters who could not be traced, and two who had gone to Canada. With weary iteration the report kept saying "forged." Yet another committee took the matter in hand, composed of the Poplar and Stratford Branches. The findings on the main lines were those of the others. With regard to the plural voting, the committee being the one that ran the election, said plural votes were destroyed; a technical error was committed in not checking the names of members excluded through arrears; others named in the first report they could not trace as having gone through the branch, and thought they went through some other source for the motive of disqualifying Unwin, and denied the view that Osborne had done what he had done in the interests of purity of elections; that Osborne had written Unwin telling him it was for something he, or Stratford, had done, so that it was out of spite and revenge. They also pointed out that other branches had committed irregularities, but were allowed to explain.

The E.C., after hearing both deputations, refused to alter their resolution of disfranchisement. To an amendment that Unwin had no part in the matter, two voted in favour. It must be understood that only the question of two plural voters was raised by Walthamstow, and that the other matters arose out of the investigations. Mr. Bell was blamed by the E.C. for publishing in "Reynolds's Newspaper" references to the matter. It was carried to the Leicester A.G.M., when "Next business" was carried on the motion of Henderson, Tyne Dock.

After the Osborne decision in the House of Lords a voluntary Parliamentary Association was formed, and Osborne still kept pegging away at the question of the funds, and he was warned against so doing. So at the June sitting of the E.C. it was unanimously decided that Osborne and Addison be expelled. On July 22, 1910, Osborne issued a writ claiming an injunction against their action. It was heard before Mr. Justice Warrington and resulted in a judgment of dismissal, the objection taken by the society being that the Trade Union Act prevented an action being taken, the judge holding to that view.

On page 141 of his "Sane Trade Unionism" Osborne says: "When the expulsion case came on the union claimed that a Trade Union existed for a purpose in restraint of trade, and was therefore illegal at common law. They were outlaws, whose existence was contrary to public good, and those who joined must renounce all freedom and be obedient to the governing body in all things. . . . One would suppose such a definition came from the most biased capitalist; that it came from the unions themselves is a matter of surprise and regret."

On a later page he says: "The extravagant and unworthy pleas failed. The Appeal Court brushed aside these legal quibbles, and ordered the case to go to trial on its merits. Recognising the weakness of their position and not desiring the exposure of the witness-box, the defendant society admitted the wrong and settled the action out of

court. This decision altered the case completely. Members who took active steps to prevent the use of Trade Union funds for the purpose of party politics were no longer in fear of expulsion from any of the various unions."

This is Osborne's balance sheet :—

“ APPEAL TO THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

“ 77, Barrett Road, Walthamstow,

“ April 7th, 1910.

“ Dear Sir or Madam,—The generous response to my appeal for funds has enabled me to successfully defend in the ‘Lords’ the position gained in the Appeal Court. I had hoped that a substantial portion of the funds would have been available for return to the subscribers, but the big fight put up by the appellant society compelled me to meet them on similar lines. To make the Judgment effective on Trade Unions generally, and to guard against a reverse by Parliamentary action, it became necessary to put forward some effort; and numerous interviews have taken place, and quantities of circulars and pamphlets have been sent out. It is now generally recognised that great constitutional difficulties will be encountered in any attempt to give the Socialists the relief they seek by an alteration of the Trade Union law. At the request of my branch, Councillor W. Tyler, J.P., kindly consented to audit the accounts, and I beg to submit a copy herewith; and also to take this opportunity of thanking you for your generous assistance.

“ Yours obediently,

“ W. V. OSBORNE.”

APPEAL TO THE HOUSE OF LORDS RE TRADE
UNION FUNDS.

AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF RAILWAY SERVANTS V. OSBORNE.

RECEIPTS.				EXPENDITURE.			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
By Public Subscriptions	384	19	6	To Solicitor's Bill of Costs	883	19	3
„ Costs recovered	523	19	3	„ Printing, Posting & Carriage	17	12	8½
				„ Loss of Time, Fares and Ex-			
				penses	3	11	7
				„ Stationery, Books and Docu-			
				ments	1	4	2½
				„ Incidentals	0	18	3
				„ Printing and Postage of			
				Balance Sheets	0	18	4
				„ Balance	0	14	5
	£908	18	9		£908	18	9

I hereby certify that having audited the accounts in connection with the above case, the same are correct, and in my opinion care and economy have been practised.

Westwood House, Walthamstow,
April 7th, 1910.

WILLIAM TYLER, J.P.

Chapter XIX.

LABOUR STANDS FOR FREE TRADE AND WINS PARLIAMENTARY TRIUMPHS.

THE one historical event, which overshadowed all else at that time, having carried us forward, we now step back to glance at other events of that period. The years 1900 to 1903 were years of declining membership. Not that activity was absent. Movements abounded; some of them small, others sectional; the time had not yet come to weld all into a common cause. Besides, it was the evolution of the Parliamentary phase. The North British dragged their movement wearily along. The Lancashire and Yorkshire locomen closed theirs, which had been in operation from 1901. Some of a very narrow idea were sanctioned by the E.C., others were blankly refused, the idea with many proposers of movements being that they might bring in members. This generally happened. The General Secretary, in December, 1902, drew the governing body's attention to the large number of grade movements proposed during trade depression, with prospects of a still further slump. It was when trade had improved, or was improving, that men should take occasion by the hand. Mr. Bell pointed out the moral of the movements. During booming trade, overtime ran high, and when trade fell, and wages went down to the normal, then men began to ask for movements. In times of prosperity contentment ruled, in adversity discontent; but when the period of discontent came the chance for raising the normal wage was gone.

The records of the society during these years are studded with resolutions sanctioning movements which were seldom heard of again. Many had never even a semblance of life; others were consumptive at birth and ought never to have been granted.

During the year a revision of rules took place. The home funds which branches held to pay donation and suspension had crept up to £73,567 at the end of 1901, notwithstanding that these funds had been levied upon to meet temporary emergencies, and also to the extent of 25 per cent. to meet the expenses of the Taff Vale case. It was considered desirable that these funds should be centralised, in which case they would carry a higher interest, be at call, besides being in other ways advantageous; so the Annual Meeting altered the rule centralising the fund.

In the same year Mr. W. L. Jackson, who had represented North Leeds, was elevated to the Lords, and Sir A. Lawson, a G. E. director,

was put forward as a candidate and defeated, a good answer to a company that only allowed their workmen to exercise the right of civic representation with their permission.

The Railway Employment Prevention of Accidents Act of 1900 had its operations hindered by the failure of the Board of Trade to draft rules for its working. Mr. Gerald Balfour was an ornamental head, and not a worker and thinker like Mr. Ritchie. On January 14th, 1902, the rules were published, after a Committee had amended them. Mr. Bell attended the Committee, effectively urging a tightening up of the rules; although the companies objected this was eventually done. Mr. Bell, in the following quotation, exposed a little "family arrangement": "Whilst dealing with this matter I felt compelled to draw attention to rather suspicious methods adopted by the railway companies in making their objections. The English companies entered their appeals against certain of the rules and allowed the others to go by, and, taking credit to themselves for their magnanimity and benevolence, they expressed a desire not to appear obstructive, and hoped the poor railway employ  s would receive benefit from the unopposed rules. The same thing was done by the Irish companies, and they, too, posed before the public as being of a kind, benign, and generous disposition. The point comes in here. The Irish companies objected to those rules which the English companies were not opposing, and left alone those which were being opposed in England. By this little family arrangement practically the whole of the rules were obstructed, the companies at the same time making a parade of their humane designs and bountiful magnanimity. This strikes me as being a 'blind,' 'a very transparent blind,' to quote the words of Mr. Justice Bigham in the miners' 'stop-day' case."

This is in one respect a small matter, but it is indicative of the mental furniture of Mr. Bell. He had an excellent eye for details. Someone has said: "Life is made up of details." It is here that he has scored. He could at once see the details that might mar a plot or make a scheme, and how the little things may make or unmake plans.

During the year railwaymen asked: "Is the 'Financial Times' among the prophets?" It said on August 21st: "For a decade or more past the railway wages bill has been growing very rapidly, indeed; quite beyond the rate of increase in traffic, in fact. In a measure such growth was only a reflection of the improved conditions of labour in the country generally. But in the case of railways there has been a marked movement in the direction of shorter hours and improved conditions. That movement has received an impetus from legislation and from the organised efforts of the men's unions." We, however, bracket the two; the "organised efforts" of the union are also the cause of the legislation.

It was fitting that Mr. Bell in his report to the Swansea A.G.M. should take notice of an attack that had been made upon co-operation. Railwaymen have for the most part been ardent co-operators. They have been responsible for the planting and guidance of many a local

store. Many of the large town stores have had railwaymen upon their directorates, and, considering the varying terms of the railwayman's duty, fixed and uncertain, this shows their business capacity. The A.S.R.S. in its corporate capacity has also helped the productive side of the movement: the General Builders Limited, the Pioneer Co-operative Printers (Tudor Street), in which we took up 200 shares, the Bethesda Quarries, the Ealing Tenants, all in turn have received financial aid. When at St. Helens the private traders endeavoured to smash co-operation by boycotting members of co-operative societies who were in their employment, and by means of innuendoes in their organ sought to damage societies, we railwaymen, as Trade Unionists, in the interests of fair play, or as co-operators, took sides with the co-operators against unscrupulous attacks. After attacking co-operative societies at Doncaster and a few other places, they fell upon the co-operative sword at Plymouth, and both the movement of the traders and their organ died. The Congress stood by co-operation.

At this Congress Mr. Garrity resigned, his place being filled by J. E. Williams, of Pontypool, at an adjourned General Meeting held in London the following year.

Those in authority, and also the members, seemed to be of opinion that the Trustees of the society had unlimited power to loan money to individuals or societies on personal security, so the Finance Committee reported to the E.C. in March, 1903: "There being a diversity of opinion as to the power of the society to grant loans to persons or societies outside our own membership, for the information of members we append solicitors' opinion to a deputation that recently waited upon them:—

" 1. Is it competent for the society to lend a sum of money to a body of five members on personal security repayable in three months?

" The solicitors replied: 'Our answer is that the society cannot do any such thing.'

" 2. Is it competent for the A.G.M. or the E.C. to grant a sum of money to any person, body, or bodies outside the society on personal security?

" Reply: 'We give the same answer as to the first question.'

" 3. Is it competent for the Trustees of the society in the event of the Annual Meeting or E.C. granting such sums of money to nullify such decision?

" Reply: 'We understand this question to mean whether the Trustees can refuse to sign cheques for any purpose directed by the A.G.M. or the E.C., which may be illegal. We are of opinion that they can so refuse.' "

These are points which represent the difficulties which Trustees have when the governing body have not seen what the Trustees are aware of, and which tends to bring them in conflict, when their most earnest desire is to support the governing body in any form, in the disbursement of money.

During 1903, to more effectually play with the Trade Disputes Bill, a Royal Commission on Trade Disputes and Trade Combination was appointed, on which one Trade Unionist was appointed. Never was a Commission so well boycotted by Trade Unionism. In a word, it had the merit of a strike. The Free Labour Association made much use of it.

During the year another of those unfortunate strikes took place in Ireland. The E.C. had sanctioned a movement on the Lough Swilly Railway, and then at its next sitting gave Mr. Hudson authority to tender notices if occasion arose. This was done on November 6th, and notices were tendered, 122 out of the 130 employed ceasing work. Evictions followed, with the aid of the Irish Constabulary. The company would not listen to reason. The strike pay was supplemented by private help. The strike lasted from November 6th, 1903, to February 22nd, 1904, and was then settled by the aid of Fathers Maguire and Doherty. The men were defeated, mainly through their own differences. Seventy returned to work. The cost of the strike to the society was £852 19s. 6d. The Executive were also coming to the opinion that a more complete organisation of the men was necessary in order to effect reform in hours and wages.

Events were leading up to a national movement; and efforts were also made to rope all organisations into a solid forward movement, which was not successful. The time was not ripe.

In July, 1904, Mr. Bell issued a circular, from which the following table is taken:—

Year.	No. of Movements.	No. of Members at end of Year.
1899	8	59,819
1900	10	60,023
1901	13	55,943
1902	14	53,453
1903	12	52,355

“The results of these movements have not been satisfactory because a majority of them died natural deaths. Appeals were made to the different boards of directors for interviews, and in many cases these were ignored. Then, owing to lack of organisation, the men were unable to follow the matter up and press their demands, consequently things were just as bad at the end as they were at the beginning; in fact, they were worse. Expense had been incurred uselessly, and the membership had decreased.”

Here in a concrete form is a history of most of the movements from 1900 till a national movement took shape in 1906. Men beat the bars of their prison in vain, wasted effort, wasted wealth, weakened strength, because demand without strength to enforce it is worse than if the demand had never been made. The figures above furnish their own argument. It was left for the General Secretary, not believing in small area or sectional movements, to wrest what he could out of them. He advised, he led, he guided, and warned, and at the same

time he went on with his work in Parliament and out of it effectively aiding the society, and even defeating the Government, because that most weak and inefficient President of the Board of Trade (Gerald Balfour) had ever refused an hours return. That return of hours for October, 1903, was a black record, and gave :—

On Duty.	No. of Cases.
13 hours	64,624
14 „	22,046
15 „	7,976
16 „	2,670
17 „	1,070
18 „ and over.....	1,120

Will anyone say that with the Hours Act handy and effective these need have been? The men could have broken them at once had they been willing. Others are not wholehearted in their efforts to throw up long hours with a low wage, in exchange for shorter hours and a higher wage. That represents the true inwardness of all hours' movements, and is confirmed by history.

How helpful returns have been to a diminution of hours, let the undermentioned figures as compared with the return of eighteen months before show. This return is for March, 1905 :—

On Duty.	No. of Cases.
13 hours	48,396
14 „	16,159
15 „	4,703
16 „	1,665
17 „	667
18 „ and over.....	506

Of course, March is clearer of fog than October, but, allowing for all that, when, as in the last line, it is over 50 per cent. lower, we are justified in assuming these returns lead to shorter hours. So this, eitherside brakes and vehicles without brakes, were among the matters which the General Secretary took in hand, longer trains and larger locomotives being among the newer questions which came to the front.

It was patent to all beholders during these two or three years that any effort to work with the Associated Society was like trying to harness the wind. Efforts towards unity were broken in the making; the most conciliatory spirit and actions were misconstrued out of all conception. Meetings were held, speeches were made, resolutions passed, only to fool with the question of unity. Our literature is studded with efforts for peace with the Associated; and is strewn with the wreckage of failures and spent controversies. These controversies would crop up with unceasing regularity in common efforts, as in the transformation of the District Railway, when electricity became a factor; in the Aylesbury and Salisbury disasters, and other matters where we took the lead because more active, more far-sighted, and more businesslike. The war was carried into their own camp by a twenty-four page

pamphlet, sold for a penny, ably written by Mr. G. J. Wardle; nor did the joint meeting at Leeds in April, 1905, make for peace. They did no constructive work either by assent or effort, and tore the programme into tatters soon after.

In this year Mr. J. H. Thomas, who in all these controversies had shown an active brain, a clear head, tactfulness and capacity in speech, was elected Organiser by a clear majority of 11,304 over all other candidates, and when Mr. Bell resigned his candidature for Derby, kept the seat. Mr. Bell at this time presented to the House a very short Character Note Bill to make compulsory the giving of a character.

It would be due to declining membership, internal strife, and other things, such as the threatened Fiscal Policy, that caused Mr. Bell to write at the beginning of 1904 :—

“ I would urge you to forget all differences and remember that it will require all our energy and united power to maintain our position against those who desire to see our power and position crippled.”

The political world was in turmoil, and when Chamberlain made a Protectionist speech overnight Chiozza Money would appear on the same page of the reported speech, and simply riddle his findings. The Trade Union and co-operative world neither slumbered nor slept, and these circulars and the resolution which follows show our views, and had, indeed, a wide bearing upon our internal political differences. Alcock and Hewlett had been delegated to attend conferences at the Holborn Hall and the Cobden Club to consider this, whilst the whole Finance Committee attended another at the Holborn Hall, which dealt with the wider policy of labour. Mr. Bell reported at the December, 1903, sitting :—

“ This important question occupied the attention of the delegates to the late Trades Union Congress, and a resolution was adopted condemning the proposed change by Mr. Chamberlain, and urging Labour bodies to take action in the matter.

“ The Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress have since had the subject under discussion, as a result of which the following circulars have been issued :—

“ Circular A.

“ TO THE TRADE UNIONISTS AND THE ADULT WORKERS OF
GREAT BRITAIN.

“ The curse of Protection, led by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, to blight the happiness of hearth and home, must be resisted as you would a malignant disease.

“ Our fathers and mothers were almost starved when all they wanted to sustain life was taxed.

“ The taxes were used to pay for the wars and to pension the wealthy, and this out of the life blood of the people.

“ The Trades Congress condemned Mr. Chamberlain's proposal to tax food or to starve the workers. The miners and the

co-operators, representing 2,000,000 workers, are equally emphatic against such a hateful tax.

“ Mr. Chamberlain has the proud position of being supported by the organised blacklegs of the country: men who, when you resist a reduction in wages, are paid by the worst of employers to ‘ blackleg ’ the shop.

“ Thank God that Englishmen who toil have a vote, without which no capitalist can enter the House of Commons to commit the sin of increasing the cost of living.

“ Don’t give them the power to take the bread out of your mouths !

“ (Signed by the Committee),

“ R. BELL, M.P. (Chairman), Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants.

W. B. HORNIDGE (Vice-Chairman), Boot and Shoe Operatives.

W. C. STEADMAN (Treasurer), Barge Builders.

W. J. DAVIS, National Brassworkers.

E. COWEY, Miners’ Federation.

C. W. BOWERMAN, London Society of Compositors.

W. THORNE, Gasworkers and General Labourers.

A. H. GILL, Amalgamated Cotton Spinners.

D. C. CUMMINS, Boilermakers and Iron Shipbuilders.

F. CHANDLER, Amalgamated Carpenters and Joiners.

D. HOLMES, Northern Counties Weavers.

J. SEXTON, National Dock Labourers.

S. WOODS (Secretary), Miners’ Federation.”

“ Circular B.

“ MR. CHAMBERLAIN AND TRADE UNION LEADERS.

“ TO THE TRADE UNIONISTS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

“ Fellow Trade Unionists,—Mr. Chamberlain at Liverpool on the 27th of October last declared ‘ that, in his opinion, the resolution condemning Protection was practically the voice of the leaders and not of the rank and file, and that it did not represent the opinions of the working men’s combinations.’

“ A complete answer to this, one of the many libels used by him in the course of his Fiscal propaganda is, that the resolution in question was issued to the trades on June 3rd of the present year in the usual course, and was, therefore, before them until September. Two months were allowed for trades to send in amendments, and while there were numerous amendments sent in to other resolutions no amendment was sent in to the resolution proposed by J. Sexton, Dockers, seconded by W. E. Harvey, Miners, as follows: ‘ That this Congress strongly condemns the suggested change by Mr. Chamberlain in our present Fiscal Policy as mischievous and most dangerous to the best interests of the people

of the country, and hereby urges all other Labour bodies to make every effort to prevent such suggested change being brought about."

"That the Congress agenda was discussed by the trades is evident by the amendments to the bulk of the resolutions.

"At least 70 per cent. of the delegates to the Leicester as to all other Congresses are men who are not officials of Trade Unions, but the rank and file to whom Mr. Chamberlain appealed in his Liverpool speech, and who work at their calling the whole year round, except when they attend the Trades Congress.

"When, therefore, Mr. Chamberlain asserts that the opinion expressed at Leicester is not the opinion of the organised workmen of the country, he states what is not true, and which he either knew to be not true or, with the facilities at his hand to ascertain the truth before he made the statement, did not take the trouble to inquire into before he uttered this gross libel against the organised workers of the country.

"Mr. Chamberlain will, however, shortly have an opportunity of judging the opinion of the organised workmen of Great Britain, when we feel confident the organised trades will carry a much stronger condemnation against this method of political hooliganism.

"Signed by the Committee" (as above).

"Circular C.

"MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S MODERN FALLACIES.

"TO THE TRADE UNIONISTS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

"Fellow Trade Unionists,—Mr. Chamberlain, during his somewhat lengthy political career, has initiated more political adventures, legislative somersaults, and hollow industrial fallacies than any living politician.

"His most modern device, the fiscal agitation, is no exception to the rule, specially as exhibited in his speeches at Liverpool and Newport, where it must be admitted by every fair-minded critic that Mr. Chamberlain stooped to the common level of a political huckster and ordinary stump orator with a view of leading the working classes from their trusted allegiance, and by a fallacious process of reasoning tried to throw dust in the eyes of Trade Unionists.

"Let us examine a few of these fallacies.

"Fallacy No. 1: 'That the Trades Union Congress, in passing a resolution condemning Mr. Chamberlain's Fiscal Policy, was acting at the instigation of the Cobden Club.'—(Liverpool Speech.)

"The Trades Union Congress does not act at the instigation of any political body in the formation and execution of policy on any subject, or ask for guidance or inspiration from any politician, however great he may be, but it does its work in its own way, always keeping in view the highest interests of the working classes.

" Fallacy No. 2 : ' That tariffs on imported goods will result in increase of wages to the workers.'—(Liverpool speech.)

" The doctrine laid down in this proposition to experienced people is, to say the least of it, nothing better than a delusive and plausible fallacy; neither history, observation, nor experience justifies it. The history of every country proves beyond a doubt that just in proportion as protective tariffs are heavy, wages are low, and where they are light, wages are high. It is quite clear that the author of this fallacy cannot have read Thorold Rogers on ' Work and Wages.'

" Fallacy No. 3 : ' That the imposition of tariffs will have the effect of opening new markets for British trade and commerce.'

" The opinion of experts is that for every new market opened up as a result of import tariffs there will be two of our present markets closed against us by the imposition of heavier retaliatory duties. Our present avenues of trade with other countries are equal, and even exceed those of any other country in the world.

" Fallacy No. 4 : ' That after the introduction of the new fiscal proposals, provision will be made for old age pensions.'

" This bogie of Mr. Chamberlain's had made its appearance again for the fifth time during the last ten years. This jumping cat of promised old age pensions has served Chamberlain's purpose admirably in the past, and it may do again, but surely the deception in the past and the shady allurements of the present are too transparent to allow his seductive plans to succeed.

" Signed by the Committee " (as above).

" On the motion of Thomas and Davidson, it was unanimously resolved :—

" " That this E.C., representing 60,000 organised workers, take this the earliest opportunity of repudiating the statement made by Mr. Chamberlain at Liverpool that the organised workers of this country were not behind their leaders. Being workers from all parts of the country and mixing daily with the masses, we are emphatically of the opinion that the majority of working men will not accept any taxation of food, and, further, desire to express our opinion that a better method of alleviating the poverty of this country would be by taxation of land values, abolition of mining royalties, and the nationalisation of railways.' "

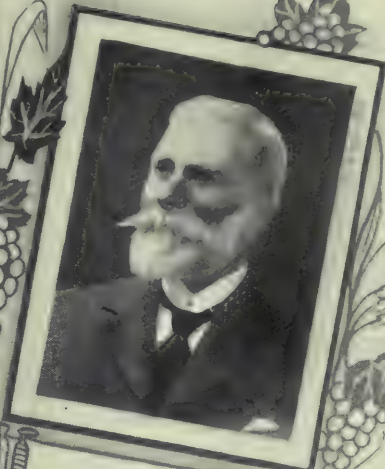
Chinese labour had been introduced into South Africa, and the men herded in compounds, and there was a moral question involved. The Trades Union Congress arranged for a demonstration in Hyde Park, and we took part in it, our view being expressed in the resolutions below :—

" On the motion of Thomas and Higgins, it was unanimously resolved :—

" " That this Committee, recognising no difference between class, creed, or colour, take this their first opportunity of protesting against



A. Mear.



J. G. Muir.



A. J. Williams.



E. Brassington.



C. Harris.



N. Rimmer.

ORGANISERS

the importation of Chinese labour into South Africa, believing that such a course is a return to the days of slavery, for the abolition of which the good name of Britain will ever be remembered, and trust that all members who can possibly attend will join the national protest organised by the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress.' ”

The London Council (A.S.R.S.) applied for grant to enable that body to take part in the Hyde Park demonstration.

“ On the motion of Rimmer and Arnold, it was resolved :—

“ ‘ That in reply to the application from the London Council for a grant to enable London railwaymen to take part in the protest against the importation of Chinese labour into the Transvaal, we recommend the Council to apply to the affiliated branches.’ ”

On March 10th Mr. Bell asked the President of the Board of Trade if he would say what, if anything, was being done to secure the adoption of the rules made by the Board of Trade; and whether he was making any arrangements for testing either-side brakes on wagons, as desired by the Railway and Canal Commissioners in July of the previous year.

In reply, Mr. Gerald Balfour said :—

“ The first part of this inquiry hardly lends itself to reply within the limits of an answer to a question in the House. The following general statement will, however, serve to indicate the nature of the steps taken by the Board—

“ The Board have addressed letters of inquiry to the several railway companies as to the action taken by them to carry out the rules dealing with (1) propping and tow-roping, (2) the lighting of stations and sidings, and (3) the protection of permanentwaymen. The replies received have been examined by the Board's technical officers, to whom also have been submitted such complaints as have been received from time to time of alleged infractions of the rules.

“ Upon the advice of their officers the Board have, in numerous cases, ordered inspections to be made under Section 13 (1) of the Railway Employment (Prevention of Accidents) Act.

“ Such inspections have been ordered and are in course of being carried out at thirty-six of the places where railway companies have represented that, in their opinion, the operations of propping or tow-roping must be continued for the present.

“ It is satisfactory to note that propping has now for the most part been discontinued, and that at numerous places railway companies have provided cross-over roads so as to avoid the necessity of tow-roping.

“ Inspections in regard to alleged insufficiency of lighting at places falling within the rule on the subject have been, or are about to be, made in eighty-three cases, and I am glad to say that where the Board's officers have considered further lighting to be needed, the companies generally have agreed to carry out their recommendations.

" As further rules become operative, I propose in the first instance to make inquiry as to the steps taken by the companies to comply with them.

" There has been some difficulty in making arrangements for the tests of either-side brakes to which the hon. Member refers. I understand, however, that the tests will be made early next month."

Mr. Bell's report continues :—

" The reply is so far satisfactory, and I shall continue to press this important question upon every available opportunity with the hope of reducing the serious loss of life and limb to our members and railwaymen generally.

" It is to be regretted that the non-members are unable to appreciate all the useful work the society continues to do for them.

" I have also introduced Bills to amend the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1897, and the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1896."

On the motion of Thomas and Dickinson, it was unanimously resolved :—

" That we appreciate the action of Mr. R. Bell, M.P., for the continual representations made by him to enforce the Railway Prevention of Accidents Bill, 1900, and would request our members to bring this matter prominently before the non-unionists, with a view of showing the activity displayed by our society in the interests of all railwaymen."

On the motion of Rimmer and Bartlett, it was unanimously resolved :—

" That this Committee wish to call the attention of members to the facilities provided by Head Office for members and branches to report through the General Secretary to the Board of Trade any case where either shunting yards or other places are imperfectly lighted, together with other defects which are detrimental to the safety of men when at work."

During this year Labour was never so active, and Bell, as if to beat down opposition to him by force of example, was more active than any Labour Member. This may be seen in the following resolution, when branches wanted a Special General Meeting to be called :—

On the motion of Thomas and Taylor, it was unanimously resolved :—

" That this E.C., having considered the statements made by the L.R.C. deputation, that Messrs. Crooks and Steadman would sign the constitution and now, having been informed by Mr. Bell that Messrs. Crooks, Ward, and Steadman have definitely refused, we request the General Secretary to write Mr. MacDonald to take the necessary steps to enforce the rules of the L.R.C. in the same manner that was adopted towards Mr. Bell, and further request the opinion of the L.R.C. Executive as to whether the action of certain members of the Committee in the Market Harboro' and Devonport contests is a violation of the L.R.C. constitution."

It was proposed by Rimmer and Dickinson :—

“That, in reply to Derby and eighty-three others branches, Birmingham and fifty-two other branches, Aberdare, Barnes, and six other branches, Bristol and District Council, Gloucester and four other branches, together with the application of Widnes Branch, asking for a Special General Meeting, a ballot of members, and for a suggested alteration to rule covering the position of Mr. Bell in relation to the L.R.C. and our affiliation with that body, we desire to inform them and the members generally that we see no immediate necessity to adopt any or either of the courses contained in the applications submitted to us, because we believe the interval that occurs before the A.G.M. will give members a favourable opportunity of making themselves thoroughly acquainted with this most important question. Having a grave sense of the responsibility that rests upon us, apart from any personal feeling which may be exhibited towards the attitude of the General Secretary, we are anxious that the question should be approached from the broadest possible spirit and considered with calm deliberation. During the last ten years the whole spirit and aims of the decisions of our governing bodies has trended in the direction of the formation of a Labour group in Parliament which shall be distinct from the existing political parties, therefore we believe that a continuation of that policy is becoming more essential to the life of our society. This is evidenced by the magnitude of interest displayed by Parliament in Labour questions, and by the actions of the capitalists and monopolists, whose attitude towards Labour and the interests of the workers is almost always antagonistic. For these reasons we strongly advocate a continuance of the policy of strict adherence to independent party action, believing any other method of expediency would prove fatal to the success of our long-sought desires.”

An amendment was moved by Loxstone and Burgneay :—

“That, in reply to Birmingham (Aston) and fifty-two other branches, this Committee have no desire that the policy of this society with regard to politics should be any other than that which is in harmony with the views of the majority of our members, and considering the feeling caused of late between our General Secretary and the L.R.C., to which we are affiliated, we decide to take a vote of our members at once to ascertain their opinions as to whether we shall continue to be affiliated to that body or not, that voting papers be issued at once for that purpose and be returned in good time, so that the result of the vote may be submitted to the A.G.M.”

A further amendment was moved by Thomas and Cody :—

“That, in reply to the various communications received *re* the position of Mr. Bell and the L.R.C., we regret the misunderstanding that has arisen both with regard to the E.C. and the General Secretary, but, seeing this body decided to refer this matter to the A.G.M., and in order to arrive at a decision in accordance with the wishes of the majority, we decide without a personal expression of opinion from this

body, to place on the A.G.M. agenda the deletion of all words after 'contested' in Rule 13, section 4, clause 4. In the meantime we trust the matter will be well considered and a decision that will be acceptable to all arrived at."

The second amendment was carried.

At the 1904 A.G.M. Messrs. J. H. Thomas and J. J. Pickering (Gateshead) stood for the Presidency, Mr. Thomas being elected. He wrote to the President as follows:—

" Swindon,

" October 3rd.

" Dear Loraine,—I am in receipt of your telegram, together with many others, for which I am extremely obliged. Kindly convey to Congress my sincere and heartfelt thanks for the great honour they have conferred on me. I extremely regret that a series of meetings in connection with the municipality prevent me thanking the delegates in person, and I can only say that it shall be my one endeavour to discharge the many and responsible duties appertaining to the office with that credit and dignity that has been so marked a feature of my predecessors. No one realises more than myself the grave and important questions that will receive the attention of Congress during the week, but I feel sure they are competent to do what is best in the interests of the society. Trusting you will have a successful week. With kind regards to all.

" Yours sincerely,

" J. H. THOMAS."

During this year A. McLaren, who was secretary of Liverpool No. 1 Branch, and for many years an exceedingly active member, having been many times nominated for high positions, withheld the Orphan Fund money of one of our members and used it in his business, and was sentenced to fifteen months' imprisonment.

At the first E.C. meeting of March, 1905, the increased membership was reported: Scotland, 268; Ireland, 320; but England and Wales showed 1,052.

The Labour Party had elected John Burns as Chairman, and Bell and Fenwick as whips.

The Parliamentary Committee had considered the need of a Labour Press, and sent to us, as to others, the following circular:—

" CO-OPERATIVE PRINTING PRESS AND LABOUR NEWSPAPER.

" Ladies and Gentlemen,—At the Congress held in Leeds in September last the following resolution was, after considerable discussion, passed and remitted to your Committee: 'That, with a view of putting into effect the resolution carried unanimously at the last Trades Union Congress in favour of launching a daily Labour paper, it be an instruction to the Parliamentary Committee to take steps to form a Co-operative Labour Press, on the lines of the following scheme, drafted by the London printing trade

societies, and to issue the prospectus to every Trade Union in Great Britain, together with an urgent appeal to them to take up shares.'

" It will be remembered that at the Leicester Congress a resolution was unanimously passed approving the establishment of a daily paper devoted to the interests of Labour, and that as a result of a Conference with the representatives of the General Federation of Trades and the Labour Representation Committee, a joint circular was issued to the trades in May of last year recommending the establishment of a weekly paper, to be started with a capital of from £30,000 to £40,000, and pointing out that if it was decided to start a daily paper a sum of from £120,000 to £150,000 would be required. It will also be remembered that the response to the circular inquiry *re* the measure of financial support likely to be accorded to the scheme was of an extremely disappointing character.

" The necessity that Labour should own and control a paper entirely devoted to its interests has, however, been long and keenly felt, and this necessity has been emphasised recently by the fact that to a large extent the leading journals of this country are being bought up by a few capitalists for the purpose of advocating policies inimical to the best interests of workmen.

" The Committee, therefore, invite the earnest attention of the various trades to the resolution passed at the recent Congress, and to the draft prospectus herewith appended.

" Replies to the question submitted should reach the Secretary not later than April 30th, 1905, and be duly authenticated by the names of the officials of the union.

" 1. Do you favour the establishment of a Co-operative Printing Press and the starting of a daily Labour paper?

" Answer.....

" 2. How much money is your society prepared to invest?

" Answer.....

" Signed,

" J. SEXTON (Chairman).

R. BELL, M.P. (Vice-Chairman).

W. C. STEADMAN (Treasurer).

C. W. BOWERMAN.

D. C. CUMMINGS.

W. J. DAVIS.

A. H. GILL.

J. HASLAM.

W. B. HORNIDGE.

D. J. SHACKLETON, M.P.

W. THORNE.

A. WILKIE.

" SAM WOODS, Secretary."

By way of reply, the following motion and amendment were submitted, the motion being carried :—

On the motion of Bell and Beardsley, it was resolved :—

“ That this society, believing in the absolute necessity of the establishment of a Labour paper, hereby authorises the investment of £1,500 in the scheme, provided the Committee agree to increase the share capital to £100,000, and that the balance is guaranteed by other Trade Unions.”

An amendment was moved by Turner and Cody :—

“ That, in reference to the question of a Co-operative Printing Press and Labour newspaper, this Committee desires to know upon what ground the amount of £10,000 is based as being sufficient for the purpose enumerated, seeing that the Joint Committee of the General Federation of Trades, the Labour Representation Committee, and the Trades Union Congress say that it cannot be done for less than £120,000.”

A proposal for a working-class insurance was turned down. The condition of Ireland, both with regard to decreased membership and mounting expenses was considered.

Mr. Bell further reported :—

“ IRISH AFFAIRS.

“ Further to my report to the Committee in December last, I then stated that it was my intention, upon the completion of last year, to prepare a balance sheet for that year for the consideration of the E.C.

“ I now submit a quinquennial statement of the expenditure over income and membership for the five years ending December, 1904, and also a summary balance sheet of all Irish income and expenditure for the same period. It will be observed that the total expenditure in excess of income for the five years amounts to £3,351 16s. 8d., and this is lighter than for the preceding five years. I feel, therefore, it is my duty to bring this before your notice with a view to it receiving your consideration as to whether something cannot be done in Ireland whereby the income should meet the expenditure. It is a serious loss to the society to have this one quarter of its area to be such a heavy drain upon the other parts. It must not, however, be accepted that any blame is to be attached to Mr. Hudson, for the conditions would probably be the same with any other person in his position. The matter is now left in your hands.”

" SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENSES, IRISH BRANCHES, FIVE YEARS ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 1904.

INCOME.				EXPENDITURE.			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Members' contribu- tions "A".....	4445	16	1	Donation and Suspen- sion pay	1067	10	5
Members' contribu- tions "B".....	732	18	5	Sick pay	45	4	11
Entrance fees	121	13	0	Death, £215 ; Super- annuation, £180.....	395	0	0
Sick Fund contribu- tions	44	3	5	Orphan Fund pay- ments	2303	3	8
			5344 10 11	Protection account (or- dinary and L. & L.S. movement)	1420	5	9
Orphan Fund sub- scriptions	7	13	8			5231	4 9
Bank interest	105	6	8	Legal charges.....		755	3 10
Sale of goods, etc. ...	55	7	8	Mr. Hudson — Wage, £886 16s. 10d.; ex- penses, £573 10s. 5d..	1460	7	3
Parliamentary levy...	33	18	7	Mr. Hudson — Office rent	150	0	0
			202 6 7	E.C. delegate expenses	209	14	2
Legal charges recovered from deft. (Tevenan v. Vandentergh) ...			161 0 0	A.G.M. ,, ,,	74	2	1
			5707 17 6			1894	3 6
Balance, loss.....			3351 16 8	Irish T. U. C. and special grant (£10) to Belfast Butchers ...	58	8	5
				Labour Representa- tion Committee, part charge	12	5	6
				Salaries of branch secretaries	287	17	5
				Rent branch meetings, postage, etc.	820	10	9
						1179	2 1
			£9059 14 2			£9059	14 2

NOTE.—£1,385 0s. 6d. Donation and Protection Funds gone to L. & L. S. movement.
Expenditure over income, and membership for each of the five years ending December, 1904 :—

	£	s.	d.		
1900	812	10	5	Membership	1093
1901	217	4	2	„	1637
1902	284	4	10	„	1683
1903	800	5	6	„	1633
1904	1237	11	9	„	1313
			£3351 16 8		

Total number of branches, 32.

“ On the motion of Bell and Emblem, it was unanimously resolved :—

“ That, in reply to Mr. Hudson's statement regarding the fore-
going, we most willingly take advantage of this opportunity of placing
on record our opinion that Mr. Hudson is not in any way responsible
for the unsatisfactory state of our organisation in Ireland. We recog-
nise that Mr. Hudson took over his duty as Irish Secretary at a most
critical time, and we have no reason to believe that a better state
of affairs would have existed under any other officer who could have

been appointed. We, however, agree with the insertion of the statements by the General Secretary regarding the financial loss to this society, as in our opinion nothing can be gained by concealing from the members the true state of affairs. We are pleased to say that, in our opinion, the prospects of our society in Ireland are brighter now than they have been for some time past.' ”

A proposed benevolent scheme was submitted to the branches, but only 117 replied. Twenty-nine were in favour, eighty-two against, and six favoured it conditionally. Later it was brought forward again and became operative.

A ballot was taken as to whether or not the proposed alteration of rules should embody the Parliamentary objects. The report is as follows :—

“ SCRUTINEERS’ REPORT RE VOTING FOR PARLIAMENTARY CONTRIBUTION.

“ TO THE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

“ GENTLEMEN,

“ In accordance with your instructions, we have duly examined, counted, and tabulated all votes recorded by the members *re* ‘ Parliamentary Contributions ’ being embodied in the rules of the society.

“ We have taken the comparative statement of membership for the year 1904 as a basis for comparison, viz. :—

England and Wales	48,495	members
Ireland	1,313	„
Scotland	3,599	„
<hr/>		
Total.....	53,407	„
New members to June, 1905	1,521	„
<hr/>		
Total.....	54,928	„

“ The total voting papers received are 26,762, or 50 per cent. of the membership for the year ending 1904.

“ We find as the result of our scrutiny that 534 branches, representing 51,272 members, have voted as follow, viz. :—

In favour of Parliamentary contributions being embodied in the rules	21,713
Not in favour	4,825
Papers disqualified (having no branch stamp) from 65 branches, but showing a distinct vote—	
In favour	171
Not in favour	51
Papers spoilt	2
<hr/>	
Total	26,762
Majority in favour of contribution, 16,888.	

“ A further analysis of the voting of these 534 branches, with 51,272 members, shows :—

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)		
Country.	No. of Branches.	Membership.	No. of voting papers received.	Result of Voting.			Percentage of voting.	No. of mem- bers not voting.	Percentage.	Totals of columns 4 and 7.
				For.	Against	Dis-qualified.				
England and Wales ...	480	46879	24523	20189	4146	188	52	22356	46	46879
Ireland.....	15	1007	597	544	23	30	45	410	31	1007
Scotland	39	3386	1642	980	656	6	48	1744	48	3386
	534	51272	26762	21713	4825	224		24510		51272

“ We also find that 69 branches, with 2,135 members, have not sent in any returns, viz. :—

England and Wales 47 branches, 1,616 members, or 3 per cent.

Ireland 14 „ 306 „ 23 „

Scotland 8 „ 213 „ 6 „

“ A scheduled list of these branches is submitted for your perusal.

“ Among the disqualified votes in consequence of no ‘ branch stamp ’ being affixed, we feel it to be our duty to name six branches, viz. :—

Deptford ... 49 papers (39 yes, 10 no) out of 178, not stamped.

Glazebrook... 11 „ (all yes) „ 15, „

Northallerton 12 „ (all yes) „ 34, „

Salford 15 „ (all yes) „ 43, „

Stratford ... 20 „ (all yes) „ 335, „

Waterford .. 8 „ (all yes) „ 23, „

“ Two branches, Limerick Junction, with thirty-seven papers, all appear to be signed by the same person, and Manorhamilton, with twenty papers, also appear to be signed by the same person, and are also signed by three persons, hence we disqualified the whole. These papers we submit for your perusal.

“ We desire to express our appreciation of the distinct improvement in the branch returns received giving summaries, which is of great assistance, and trust in future every branch will adopt this course, and send in the papers and flat parcels with summaries.

“ Many communications to the H.O. were included in parcels of returns, hence a delay to the branches must naturally ensue, as the parcels are not opened by the office staff.

“ The Colne Branch sent in papers this morning (September 19th) too late to be included in our returns, which show twenty-five voting Yes, two voting No, and one no branch stamp; total, twenty-eight papers.

" We trust our efforts to discharge our duties by giving the summarised and percentage of voting will meet with your approval and give satisfaction to yourselves and the members generally.

" We are, gentlemen,

" Yours faithfully,

" September 19th, 1905."

" E. T. BILLET, } Scrutineers.
T. RANDALL, }

" PARLIAMENTARY FUND.

" The following resolution was adopted on this subject, viz. :—

" ' That this Conference accepts the decision of the recent ballot, and agrees to the principle of a levy of 3d. per quarter for the purpose of Labour representation being embodied in the rules.'

" To this the following amendment was moved :—

" ' That the cost of providing for Parliamentary representation shall be met out of the present contributions, thus obviating the necessity of the levy recommended by the E.C.'

" For the resolution, 55; against, 1. For the amendment, 3; against, 55. Resolution carried."

Mr. Bell at this time was leading a strenuous life, and the Stratford Branch, anxious perhaps for his health, wanted the E.C. to inquire into his activities with regard to the King's Cross Publishing Company, the North Wales Quarries, and the Co-operative Printing Society, he being a director of each, and in all of which we had invested money. But the E.C. declined to interfere with any such matters, considering that his private time was his own, and they neither had nor wanted any control over such.

When the Penrhyn dispute at Bethesda was being waged, the co-operative movement took a lease of work lands on the opposite side of the Valley of Bethesda, there being one mine which had for some time been abandoned, whilst a long tunnel had been bored in one of its mountains, which showed that excellent slate lay in its heart. Various circumstances hindered the development of these—the lack of capital, for one thing, bad management, the directors not being able to exercise sufficient control at such a distance, and the lack of co-operation by the workmen, and other troubles. Correspondence ensued in the Press, and the Wigan Branch brought the matter before the E.C., and they passed the following resolution, which is self-explanatory :—

" That, in reply to the Wigan Branch and their representations relative to the North Wales Quarries Limited, we are of opinion that the letters complained of emanated in a large degree from sources avowedly opposed to Trade Unionism, co-operative, and kindred societies, and would emphasise the fact that one association, well-known for its hostility to Trade Unionism, was unfair enough to publish what purported to be a full account of the circumstances relating to the dismissal of a number of workmen, and omitted to insert the reply

to the whole case, which was published in the 'Times' at the instance of our General Secretary on April 14th last, in which it is clearly made out that the dismissals took place as the result of the want of capital."

The society from the very start having had in its rules proposals for arbitration, and conciliation having been practised in a few isolated cases with beneficial results, the idea gradually widened, and the concluding portion of the President's (Mr. Thomas) address dealt with the subject. He said, after dealing with the economic changes which had revolutionised railway work, showing how the larger traffic had been worked with less labour and wages owing to inventive genius, that electricity was in vogue and would be extended, and that the political changes were in the near distance, when the workers would have "an early opportunity of settling our score; the longer the delay, the more severe the punishment" would be of those politicians inimical to Labour. He gave the history of the Trade Disputes Bill, of aliens, and the unemployed, Labour representation, and the value of Ruskin College.

Mr. Thomas continued :—

"PERMANENT CONCILIATION BOARDS.

"I have long felt the need of a better understanding between the employers and employés, which would most certainly work out to the advantage of both. The formation of such bodies to be a number representing the employers to be elected in such a manner as those responsible think best, meeting an equal number elected in the most democratic manner possible by the workers themselves, and by meeting from time to time the employés would benefit by the education and business capacity of their employers and so broaden their minds that they could better appreciate the commercial side of the undertaking, and in the same manner the employers would benefit by the brains and practical experience of the workmen, and so assist them to better understand their difficulties and requirements. How much better would such a state of society be than both parties endeavouring to gain their ends by the cruel and at all times unprofitable method of brute force. This desirable stage of evolution could be brought about if only the workers were to show their anxiety for such by joining our organisation, and thereby proving that we speak in the name of the majority. Will our fellow workers respond? We at least must sound the call and make one bold bid for principle, based upon equity and justice to all, and, in conclusion, I feel sure you will have noticed and appreciated the manner in which the various members of the E.C. have obtained the necessary leave of absence to discharge their duties. In no single instance has any difficulty been experienced, and which goes to prove that closer relationship exists between the members of our society and the various railway companies than hitherto, and which I sincerely trust will continue. In again thanking you, I am conscious of that mature experience and marked ability which was so characteristic

a feature of my predecessors, and which I can only hope to emulate. I feel sure it is hardly necessary for me to ask your hearty co-operation in making the year 1906 a memorable one in the history of the society, of which we have every reason to be proud."

Mr. J. H. Thomas was elected as President for 1906 without opposition, and the Town Clerk of Swindon sent a telegram of congratulation. But his tenure of office was short owing to being elected Organiser.

When the E.C. met in March great changes had taken place, and more changes still came as a result of it. The greater part of that sitting dealt with matters political. Mr. Bell had pages in his report of what had taken place. The Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress were prompt with interviews to the ministers concerned, dealing with matters that affected them and with general conditions. The Trade Disputes Bill had now its chance and became law. Old age pensions came along. Campbell Bannerman expressed his sympathy with every word of what was said: "That so far from sapping the independence of the country, it would have an opposite effect, give independence and security for declining years, increasing the manliness and courage with which they would face difficulties." They received recognition for the employés of the State, and altogether there was more hopefulness for Labour than at any time in our rough island story.

Here we must let Mr. Bell speak:—

"Since your last meeting the General Election has taken place. On the 8th January the King dissolved Parliament and writs were immediately issued.

"Throughout the country the elections have been almost of a startling character, especially in view of the enormous change in the composition of the new Parliament. The whole of the Members of the Liberal Government, formed after the late Government resigned, were elected, whilst, on the other hand, the majority of the more important Members of the late Government were defeated at the polls, the final results being:—

Liberal	379
Conservative	157
Labour	51
Nationalists	83
	<hr/>
	670

"The most satisfactory result, viewed from the Labour standpoint, is the return of fifty-one Labour representatives.

"Of the four candidates put forward by this society three were returned, *i.e.*, on the 13th January I was returned at Derby at the head of the poll with 3,960 majority, on the 15th January at Newcastle Mr. Hudson was returned at the head of the poll with a majority of 6,927, and on the 17th January Mr. Wardle was returned at Stockport at

the head of the poll with 2,708 majority. Mr. Holmes made a gallant fight in East Birmingham, but was defeated by 585 votes.

“ The expenses in connection with all the elections have been paid, the amount for Derby being £1,047 4s. 8d.

“ On the motion of Rimmer and Topping, it was resolved :—

“ ‘ That this Committee rejoices in the fact that Labour has been so successful in the recent Parliamentary elections, which resulted in fifty-one Labour Members being returned, and we believe that this is directly due to the desire manifested throughout the country on the part of the workers to have a Labour Party in the House of Commons independent either of the two political parties, as evidenced by the success of the Labour Representation Committee, which has now taken the name of “ Labour Party.” ’

“ In the last Parliament all the Labour Members, without distinction, were united in one group, with Mr. J. Burns as Chairman and Mr. Fenwick and myself as Secretaries. This procedure has been departed from in this Parliament through the action taken by those returned under the auspices of the L.R.C., who held a meeting on the day before the opening of Parliament, formed themselves into a party, appropriated the title used by the old-constituted group, elected their Chairman and Secretaries, without one of the Labour Members not associated with the L.R.C. being invited to attend.

“ I do not question the right of the L.R.C. members to do this, but I cannot conceive any harm would have been done; on the contrary, I feel certain, that unity of all the Labour Members would have been the result, if all had met together for discussion.

“ In the last Parliament Messrs. Hardie, Henderson, Crooks, and Shackleton, L.R.C. men, were in the Labour Group, with Messrs. Burns, Broadhurst, Fenwick, myself, and others, when the L.R.C. constitution was the same as it is now. Then why the change in policy? The L.R.C. Members have decided upon their future policy without reference to the other Labour Members.

“ Mr. MacDonald, in a statement, said that ‘ last year’s precedent would not be followed,’ and that he wished it to be recorded that in all probability they would ‘ force the pace of the rest of the Labour men in the House.’

“ Such observations were as unwise as uncalled for, and go to prove that a caucus of Labour men can be as oppressive and tyrannical as capitalists. No person can show any instances where and when the Labour Members, who have been in the House previously, have acted contrary to the interests of the workers or failed to take advantage of every opportunity to bring their claims before the House. But it must be clear to everybody that fourteen men had not the same chances as fifty-one. Therefore, if Labour has been able to make a better show in the business already done, it is not entirely due to any more earnestness or desire than previously, but because the opportunities have increased over 70 per cent. in the ballot and debates, besides having a more genuinely sympathetic Government and House.

“ The result is, that the old group have followed up their previous policy and met in the usual way on the day after the opening of Parliament, and in consequence of the L.R.C. appropriating our title we were obliged to find a new one, and the *original* Labour Party is now called *The Trade Union Labour Group*, and consists of twenty-one Labour members. No one is accepted within who is not a Trade Unionist. The Chairman is the well-known Trade Union leader, Mr. Enoch Edwards, and myself Vice-Chairman, with Messrs. Fenwick and J. Ward Secretaries. No one can say that those who form this group have not the interests of Labour and the people at heart equally as much as any member of the ‘ Labour Party.’

“ The question as to where we may sit has not troubled us, and is quite immaterial, because there are only two Lobbies in the House. What we do care about and are agreed upon is to bring about reforms for those whom we represent, and this, if necessary, independent and irrespective of all political parties, and to accomplish our objects we are prepared to co-operate with any individual or parties aiming at the same reforms as ourselves.

“ The following compose the two Labour groups :—

LABOUR PARTY.

Barnes, G. N. (Engineer)	Macpherson, J. T. (Steel Smelter)
Bowerman, C. W. (Compositor)	O’Grady, J. Furniture Maker)
Clynes, J. R. (Gas Worker)	Parker, J. (Gas Worker)
Crooks, Will (Cooper)	Richards, T. F. (Shoemaker)
Duncan, C. (Engineer)	Roberts, G. H. (Compositor)
Gill, A. H. (Textile Worker)	Seddon, J. A. (Shop Assistant)
Glover, T. (Miner)	Shackleton, D. J. (Textile Worker)
Hardie, J. Keir (Miner)	Snowden, P. (ex-Civil Servant)
Henderson, A. (Iron Moulder)	Summerbell, T. (Compositor)
Hodge, J. (Steel Smelter)	Taylor, G. W. (Miner)
Hudson, W. (Railwaymen)	Thorne, Will (Gas Worker)
Jenkins, J. (Shipwright)	Walsh, S. (Miner)
Jowett, F. W. (Factory Worker)	Wardle, G. J. (Railwaymen)
Kelly, G. D. (Lithographer)	Wilkie, A. (Shipwright)
MacDonald, J. R. (Journalist)	Wilson, W. T. (Shipwright)

TRADE UNION LABOUR GROUP.

Abraham, W. (Miner)	Johnson, W. (Miner)
Bell, R. (Railwaymen)	Maddison, F. (Compositor)
Brace, W. (Miner)	Richards, T. (Miner)
Broadhurst, H. (Stonemason)	Steadman, W. C. (Barge Builder)
Burt, T. (Miner)	Vivian, H. (Carpenter)
Cremer, W. R. (Carpenter)	Ward, John (Navy)
Edwards, E. (Miner)	Wadsworth, J. (Miner)
Fenwick, C. (Miner)	Williams, J. (Miner)
Hall, Fred (Miner)	Wilson, J. (Durham) (Miner)
Haslam, J. (Miner)	Wilson, J. H. (Seaman)
Johnson, J. (Miner)	

"You are requested to ask me to come into line and sign the L.R.C. ticket. It is to be regretted that branches or members cause any differences by continually raising this question when the matter has been discussed at length at the last two A.G.M.'s, when it was clearly understood that I resolutely, but respectfully, declined to pledge myself to the I.L.P., as I do to either Tory or Liberal Parties, but remain independent of all political parties.

"My independence is unmistakable, as my agent, platform, and literature at my election were as independent as any other candidate, and as my election expenses show.

"On the motion of Turner and Harber, it was unanimously resolved:—

"That, in considering the question of the Labour groups in the House of Commons, we have Mr. Hudson and Mr. Wardle present to take part in the whole of the discussion of same.'

"On the motion of Rimmer and Turner, it was unanimously resolved:—

"In considering the complaint made by Mr. Bell to this Committee—arising out of the fact that by the formation of two Labour Parties in the House of Commons, the party hitherto known as the L.R.C. having appropriated the title used by the old constituted group, the members of which were not invited to attend the meeting to take part in the election of Chairman and Secretaries, and that the concordat arrived at last year at a conference between the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress, General Federation of Trade Unions, and the L.R.C., held in Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W., on February 16th, 1905—we find that this is a necessary outcome of the position created by the fact that Mr. Bell being allowed by the decision of the A.G.M. to run and work independent of the L.R.C. and without signing the constitution, and Mr. Wardle and Mr. Hudson deciding to accept the conditions which are implied by this society's affiliation to that body. Further, we are of opinion the concordat arrived at between the Trades Union Congress Parliamentary Committee, General Federation of Trade Unions, and the L.R.C. was intended only to apply to candidates seeking election to Parliament under the title of Labour.'

"On the motion of Turner and Harber, it was unanimously resolved:—

"That, in reply to the appeals from Leeds Central, Stockport No. 2, Bradford, and Smethwick Branches, requesting us to call upon Mr. Bell to fall in line with the L.R.C., we would point out to them that the matter has been decided by the A.G.M., and we have, therefore, no power in the matter.'"

Owing to the election of Mr. Thomas to the post of Organising Secretary, Mr. Beardsley had presided at two E.C. meetings, but Councillor Palin, of Bradford, was elected to preside over the Congress

and Mr. J. R. Bell was elected President of the society. The voting for the Organising Secretary was:—

J. W. Benson	1,062
J. A. Booth	296
H. Greenfield	617
W. G. Loraine	7,089
H. A. Love	830
J. H. Thomas	21,198

Thus giving J. H. Thomas a clear majority over all other candidates of 11,304.

Mr. Mear was sent to Ireland. Wardle's position and pay, seeing he was not in the employ of the society, was adjusted.

Mirfield Branch and the E.C. set a precedent—the branch by application, the E.C. by sanction—by investing £100 in the Co-operative Building Society, 22, Red Lion Square, Holborn, which might very well be followed in these later years, Mr. J. H. Thomas being the chairman of that society.

Taking all these things into consideration, the youthful 1906 promised well in its beginning. Had not the enginemmen already met and beaten out a programme? The companies also began to link up efforts to reduce competition and expenditure by working agreements with each other. The L. & N. W. had found it advantageous with the L. & Y., and now the greater brother whispered to the Midland: "Come, let us reason together; perhaps we may find common ground in some matters." One after another these proposals grew. Some tried by Parliamentary effort to effect a fusion, whereupon the public grew alarmed. Railwaymen scented danger, and took action also. Some of the branches, whether for this or other utilitarian purposes, said to the E.C.: "Do not sanction grade movements; let us have a national one." It was an echo of old-time tones, faith, and action. These branches were in advance of their time. The E.C. refused it, and again frittered away strength by surveying the affairs of a garden when a universe was before them. March of this year contained as many more sanctions. The E.C. either lacked wisdom to discern or strength to refuse. The small people said "Give," and they gave small things to small people. It was weakness sanctioning feebleness. They sanctioned also a proposed Optional Benevolent Fund when they ought to have been out scouting. They, however, did return a soft answer to a proposed Widows' Fund, and with that sent them empty away.

With June came wisdom. The following resolution was carried with one dissentient:—

"In reply to the large number of applications for movements on various railways and for a national movement, this Committee decide to grant a national movement for all grades in our society, believing the time is now opportune and realising the need for the

same. Further, we instruct the General Secretary to make the necessary arrangements for separate conferences for England, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland."

The call for such was insistent and widespread, and the A.G.M. sanctioned it. A conference was held at Birmingham on November 26th to 28th, at which 573 delegates attended, representing all grades from England and Wales, and a programme drawn up, and it was decided that it should be forwarded to the companies by the General Secretary and all negotiations conducted through him. Similar conferences were held in Glasgow and Dublin for the Scottish and Irish railwaymen, the same procedure being adopted. For each of the conferences Mr. Bell had a chart giving the number of men employed in certain grades, showing the proportion organised. Our organ, the "Railway Review," published an excellent leader dealing with it.

Meanwhile, during the year the N. E. men, as usual, had a movement, which had been in operation from November, 1903. Mr. Butterworth, the head of the department, Mr. Bell, and the Committee met during April and May, 1906, when the matters were discussed grade by grade. An interim report on the concessions was issued, and a little later a full one. To explain what followed is to quote from Mr. Bell's report to a special E.C. meeting called for the 12th of July, 1906. He reported to them:—

"There are 27,989 men employed upon the N. E. who come within the scope of the all-grades movement, of whom some 10,340 are members of the society, including 1,825 who joined this year, very few of whom are yet in benefit. Out of this membership only 2,907 interested themselves sufficiently to attend the meetings, and out of these 941 voted in favour of accepting the terms and 1,743 voted for rejecting them."

Mr. Bell gave the history of the proceedings and the causes of delay in putting matters to the touch. The Newcastle Central Branch passed this resolution and sent it to the Press:—

"That this meeting of all grades, after hearing the delegates' report regarding our present position, caused by the action of our General Secretary, seeing he has used the present agitation to settle the programme which is nearly three years old and out of date, we consider his action unjustifiable, and repudiate the concessions granted, and consider this an insult to justice; we demand the programme to be remodelled in order to suit time and circumstances, and to be again placed before the directors."

The E.C. dealt with the matter by resolution. Mr. Bell met the men at Newcastle on the following Sunday, when a stormy meeting ensued, Mr. Bell meeting with a mixed reception of groans and cheers, and a hostile resolution was passed, in which the men refused to be bound by the E.C., and said they would be guided by circumstances. The Press comments were many. The "Socialistic Standard," however, in an article headed "Found Out," libelled the General Secretary, was

prosecuted, and adjudged guilty. Mr. R. Sevier's "Winning Post" had also to pay damages to Mr. Bell.

Soon the national movement was in full swing. Literature was distributed, meetings were held, and early in the next year letters were sent to the railway companies asking them to receive deputations, accompanied by Mr. Bell. With the programme was a proposal for recognition. Effective methods of organisation went on all over the United Kingdom, and for spectacular display they were timed to be held on one day, May 12th. They went well. The companies issued what came to be known as the "Red Book," which contained reprints from the "Railway News," the company's organ. They contained wordy sentences meant to be arguments. They gave figures which bore no relation to facts as the men saw them, figures that were meant to scare the shareholders and the public, which by inference sought to show that if the programme was granted ruin would follow. Reading them, one might imagine that the last penny that could be paid had been paid, and that if more were granted the only outlook was the bankruptcy of railway undertakings. Many of the speakers on that day made merry over the book.

Almost infinite pains were taken to show that railway employment, if not the safest in the world, was wondrously safe. Did not the casualties in mines prove that railways were safer? It told us of the permanent character of railway employment, which reminded one of the porter who complained to his superintendent that his wage was a starvation one, and got the rejoinder: "Well, it is permanent." Did not they have clothes, pension and other funds and privileges, superannuation, savings banks, houses and free gardens? Were there not ambulance services for the wounded, travelling facilities, railway benevolent and other charitable institutions? It was calculated to lead the public to believe that railway life was a garden fair. A speciality was made of "The National Programme, and What it Means." At the possibility of having to pay up, the companies must have wept bitterly.

To this publication the General Secretary issued a reply, a pamphlet of twenty-four pages, entitled "The Railwaymen's Charter," which had an enormous sale. The arguments were well reasoned and closely woven. Excitement became intense among the public, and the question "Will there be a strike?" was on everyone's lips. It was decided to take a ballot of the members, to be returnable by October. Lloyd George, the President of the Board of Trade, stepped in, and Conciliation Boards were established. When that was done many of the companies were anxious to pay the expenses of the men's representatives. We decided to pay our own members' expenses. On some of the systems A.S.R.S. representation was secured almost to a man. This brought a new feature into the society. Henceforth the keen eye and the active brain were wanted. The awards of the various Boards vary considerably. The whole proceedings are printed and collated, and comprise a small library. For us these Conciliation and Arbitration Boards have been the main feature of the society's work up to the

present time. There were dismissals on the Midland on the plea of declining traffic and bad trade. Federation and amalgamation were discussed until they became nauseous, and we did not move forward a bit towards either. Local Organisers were appointed, a new feature in our methods of organisation, as already shown. Mr. Loraine was elected Organiser, the figures being :—

Bro. W. G. Loraine	17,425
„ T. Topping	3,790
„ W. E. Turner.....	2,954
„ J. Benson	1,859
„ H. Greenfield	475
„ W. Binge	551
„ H. Love	433
Total	<u>27,487</u>

thus giving Bro. Loraine a clear majority of 7,363 over the other candidates.

Chapter XX.

“RAILWAYMEN'S CHARTER”—STRIKE THREAT AND CONCILIATION—R. BELL RETIRES.

FROM the very first the rules of the A.S.R.S. had provided for arbitration. We had requested its use so often and were quite satisfied that the justice of our case could be proved before any unbiased court. The companies evidently thought so, too, and that was probably why they refused it. The N. E. was an outstanding exception. Far better, if it can be, to submit matters to the court of reason than to fight, because a battle decides nothing but that one is stronger than the other, or has marshalled its cause more skilfully and snatched victory out of strife. But if the obdurate capitalist refuses to bow to justice or reason the alternatives are submission or strikes. Unfortunately the method of grade detachment encouraged by that company had ruled too long. Men with narrow vision and selfish aims have through nearly all the years of our history hindered themselves, and others beneath them, from coming into the wage inheritance that was due to them. No argument can successfully combat the great fact that success can only come through unity, that isolation is weakness, and if our present leader, J. H. Thomas, in the days of his raw youthfulness and undeveloped brain, joined, as he did, the Associated, came to see, when intelligence developed itself, that the A.S.R.S. was better, I ask, pitting his clear brain against the best man that the Associated could furnish, is it likely that the less talented can be right? I am amazed, as I have gone through this history, to see how little intelligence has ruled with them, how self-centred they have been, how quick to twist facts and present warped statements, to aid a cause by cunning that could not be achieved by reason and fact, and suffer by the process of law in the end. Not that all has been done in that direction that could have been done, which is a tribute to us of a wished-for peace that rarely came. So in the years we have left behind, and now, federation and amalgamation proposals abound. They never came to fruition, nor did we move forward with hope. At times a gleam shot across the path, but it soon flickered and died. For sheer fatuity I have seen nothing better than a letter from Mr. Fox, dated April 20th, when, in reply to overtures, he wrote:—

“ Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen,

“ 8, Park Square, Leeds,

“ 21st April, 1906.

“ Dear Sir,—My Executive Council at their last sitting during the present month had under discussion the advisability of bringing

together the locomotivemen of Great Britain into one organisation. Their experience has taught them of the absolute necessity of such a society for locomotivemen, knowing, as they do, that the various intricacies surrounding the calling of drivers and firemen make it imperative that they should have especial protection, and that protection can only be properly provided by a thorough control and understanding of their particular work and responsibility.

" They therefore instructed me to write to the various locomotivemen's societies in the country offering amalgamation with us, and they will be glad to hear as to whether your members would be prepared to consider the matter, and if so, for a conference of the officials, or delegates, of each society to be arranged to discuss the matter thoroughly, and if possible draw up some terms whereby amalgamation could be brought about.

" They feel certain that all that is possible or necessary to be done, in connection with the other grades of the railway service and the workers generally, can be best accomplished by federation.

" May I ask you to give this your earnest consideration, feeling sure it is not money that is required to bring about the salvation of the fraternity, but the moral support of our fellows.

" An early reply will oblige, as we have a conference of our delegates sitting on May 15th and following days, and matters might be facilitated somewhat if we were able to place such replies before such conference.

" With best wishes. Trusting you are well.

" Yours faithfully,

" (Signed) A. Fox, General Secretary.

" Mr. R. Bell, M.P., General Secretary, A.S.R.S., 72, Acton Street, Gray's Inn Road, W.C."

" On the motion of Mayes and Swan, it was unanimously resolved :—

" " That, in reply to the communication of April 21st from the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, we desire to say that we have no desire to encourage any sectional society, and absolutely disagree with their proposal to absorb the whole of the locomotivemen into their society, as past experience proves conclusively that no society composed of one grade is likely to bring about that which we so ardently desire, viz., an improvement in the conditions of railwaymen generally."

I have given the letter in full so that no word of this precious document should be lost, and that it may go down the corridor of time as showing that they played fast and loose with facts, and there seemed to be a suggestion that we should strengthen a sectional organisation, perhaps by advising our locomen to go over to them. Else why was it written to us? The last paragraph but one is a priceless gem of literature. The wider question will appear in another chapter. I have gone off the beaten track, because we are now in an all-grades movement, and at the Congress held to launch this movement, as described in the last chapter, I see among the delegates there were a large number of drivers, firemen, and some motormen, the numbers of which are shown in the following resolution passed at that Congress :—

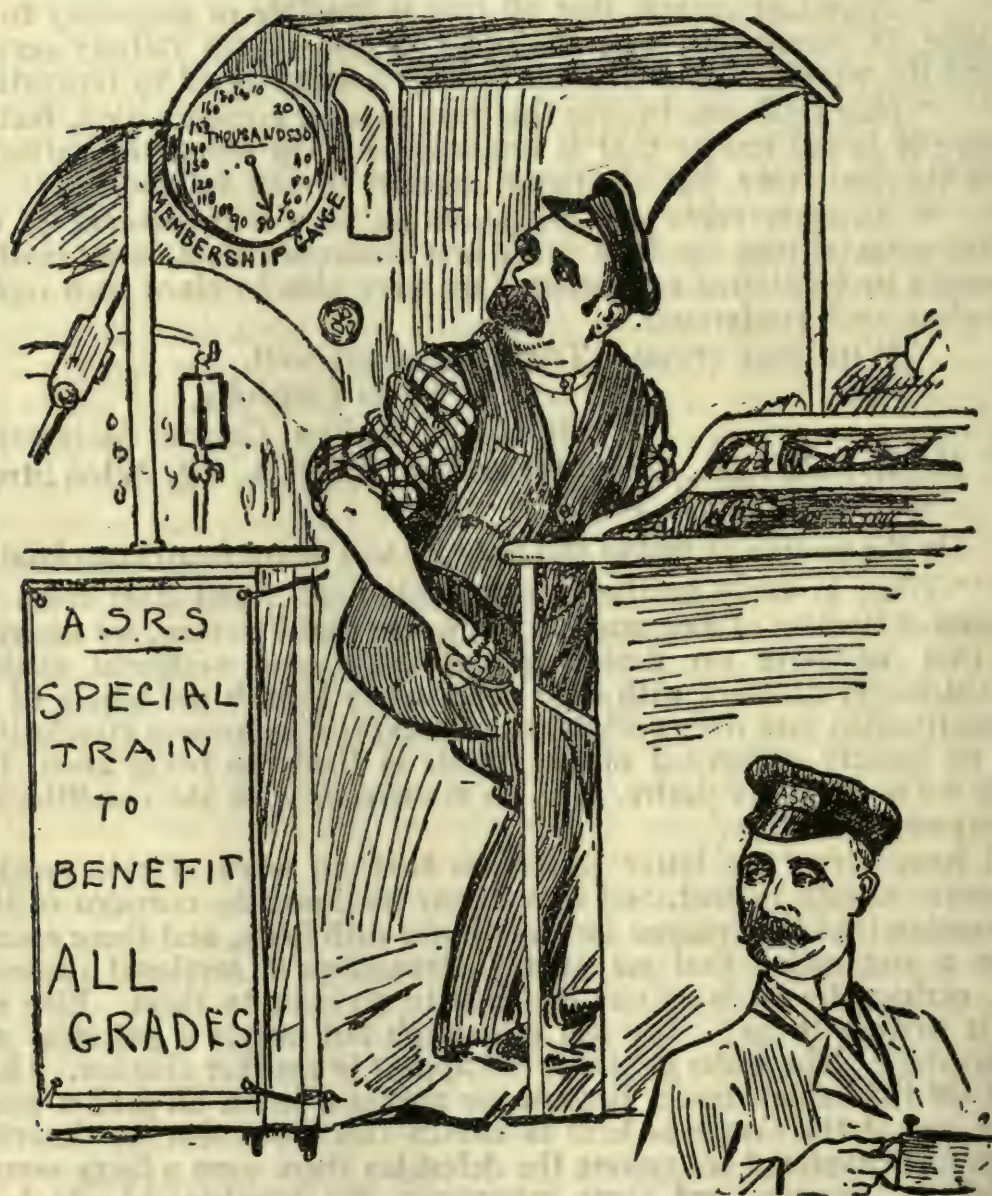
" " That this Congress, including 145 locomotivemen and representative of nearly 19,000 locomotivemen, regret the unwarrantable attack made by Mr. Fox upon the conduct of Mr. Bell as the chief

officer of our society, and, further, urge the locomotivemen of the Associated Society to recognise that our one aim and object has been to improve the position of the footplate men of this country, together with all other grades, and express our unabated confidence in Mr. Bell for the assistance he has consistently given in this matter, and extremely regret that any Trade Union leader should so far forfeit his claim to such honour by deliberately making statements foreign to the truth, and call upon the locomotivemen to give their support in the National All-Grades Movement.'

" Resolved :—

" ' That this resolution be sent to the Press.' "

To turn up the files of the " Railway Review " for 1907 and read its pages is an inspiration. This splendid cartoon appeared :—



PREPARING FOR A GOOD RUN!

Driver Dick Bell: " Well, Jimmie, what's the pressure now ? "

Fireman Williams: " Rapidly going up ! "

Driver Dick: " Ha ! that's good ; the higher the pressure the quicker the journey. "

One of the "Notes of the Day" asked its readers to lay to heart the adage which still adorned its title page, "Association is the law of progress," and urged that a belief in the power of association could only be justified when put to the proof. That belief must become a passion, and faith equal zeal. Combination was still the way of industrial salvation. Association was still the law of progress. Organisation as a method had stood the shocks of time, and so it went on with a heartening message, and other contributors added to them.

The "Daily News," in a leaderette headed "Just, But Costly," said the programme was eminently fair, and citing it, went on: "No one who has a clear conception of railway work would condemn these demands as idealistic," and hoped they would be obtained without industrial war. The staid "Pall Mall Gazette" said that "it contains within it the portents of forcible strife," and they had "the appearance of reason." Others were in the same strain. The companies were also showing increase of profits, and the men thought they should have a larger share of it. The increases of thirty-two companies was nearly a million and a half, and only five out of thirty-two had showed a decrease for the year 1906, as against that of 1905. The chairmen of the different companies referred to the agitation:—

"SHAREHOLDERS' MEETINGS.

"At the first meeting held, that of the Great Eastern Railway, Lord Claud Hamilton stated that:—

"'In the first place, we deny that there is any general unrest amongst railway servants, or dissatisfaction with their position, or that the Amalgamated Society, which only includes a minority of railway servants as its members, has any right to speak on behalf of the majority, who are free and independent men, thoroughly capable of looking after their own interests.'

"Further on in his speech Lord Claud referred to 'the interference and tyranny of Trade Unions,' and stated that to recognise the society would upset the authority of the directors, which is essential to the maintenance of strict discipline; that the men in the different departments would no longer respect the head, and 'how could the heads of departments be expected to continue to serve their directors with that zeal and fidelity which at present distinguishes them, when they were gradually becoming cognisant of the fact that their authority and responsibility was on the wane and steadily passing into other hands, for that is what the result of these concessions would surely mean, and it would bode ill for the future of railway administration and for the safety of the public.' His lordship referred to 'The Railwaymen's Charter' as being most misleading and untruthful, and finally said:—

"'We have fully and earnestly considered the alternative before us, and we do not intend to recognise the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. I ask you, on behalf of my board, to join with us in the decision at which we have arrived; I appeal to the outside public, whose welfare and safety as travellers depend upon the railways in

this country being maintained in a high state of discipline and efficiency, to support us in the stand we are making to preserve for ourselves and the staff we employ the right to continue to enjoy the privileges of free citizens, untrammelled by the coercion and tyranny of an outside, irresponsible body of men.'

"Mr. Alfred Baldwin, M.P., chairman of the Great Western Railway Company, complained of the society, acting on behalf of its members, making use of the Railway Employment (Prevention of Accidents) Act, 1900, and stated that we had encouraged the men to break the following rule of the company (Rule 19):—

" 'Every servant must assist in carrying out the rules and regulations, and immediately report to his superior officer any infringement thereof, or any occurrence which may come under his notice affecting the safe and proper working of the traffic.'

"He further stated that 'What they objected to was the Amalgamated Society being allowed to interfere between the directors and their employés.' "

Mr. Baldwin was a very large employer of labour in several other industries where he did admit such "interference" by negotiating with officials of the various unions to which his workmen belonged.

"Sir Alexander Henderson, Bart., at the meeting of the shareholders of the Great Central Company, also made some uncomplimentary references to the society, amongst which is the following:—

" 'In common with other companies who have been approached by the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, who demand recognition as the representatives of our men, we doubt their right to formulate such a demand, and we certainly cannot entertain it for one moment. We believe that so far the action of the society has been detrimental to the interests of those they are supposed to serve. A reasonable amount of overtime which the men appreciated has been taken from them, mainly, I believe, owing to the action of this self-constituted body. No doubt the agitation has been cleverly engineered and made to appear of portentous magnitude, but we are confident of the justice with which we treat our workmen, and we are equally sure that our employés recognise our fairness, and require no intermediary to act for them, and resent the attempt that is being made to foster ill-will.'

"Sir Charles Scott, Bart., chairman of the London and South-Western Company, said:—

"There is only one other subject which I desire to mention. I daresay you wish to know how we stand with the question that has created some agitation, at any rate, in the public Press, with reference to our staff. So far as the South-Western Company is concerned, there is not the slightest hesitation on my part in saying that we apprehend not the slightest difficulty in any direction. Our staff has always been loyal to the company, and you may depend upon it they always will be. Mr. Bell's proposal, which, of course, you have all read about, to accompany railwaymen to the directors, has, I believe,

been refused by all the railway companies in the country. I never knew a case in which there was more unanimity amongst the railway authorities than on this question.'

" Sir Charles then went on to say that :—

" ' Mr. Bell could not usefully attend before individual companies is shown by the fact that his demands as made upon all railway companies are identical, whereas everyone in this room, or acquainted with the different conditions obtaining on the various railways, will know that the same terms could not be applicable to all. Where the safety of the travelling public is concerned, it is essential that a high state of discipline and efficiency should be maintained, and this, in our judgment, cannot be done with other parties intervening. No reasonable comparison can be made between a railway company entrusted with the safety of the public, and placed under statutory obligations of an onerous character, with other commercial undertakings with less responsibility.'

" Mr. H. Cosmo Bonsor (South-Eastern and Chatham Railway) said :—

" ' His company had refused, and would continue to refuse, to permit a third party to come to their board-room to discuss with them as to how they were to carry on their business.'

" Lord Allerton (Great Northern) said :—

" ' His board would, as they had always done, carefully consider any particular case, or any particular district, where circumstances had changed, but it was quite impossible for them to shirk the responsibility which rested on the board, or hand over the control of the business to the intervention of parties outside.'

" Sir Ernest Paget (Midland) said :—

" ' The directors had persistently declined to allow any of their men to make representations as to grievances to be accompanied by anyone outside the company's own staff. The directors believed the men were adequately paid, and worked under conditions that compared favourably with those of other industrial concerns.' "

Other chairmen also referred to the men's demands in terms which may be regarded as fair criticism, about which we have no grounds to complain beyond the fact that they refused to concede the society the right to negotiate on behalf of its members.

Mr. Bell also sent out forms to the branch secretaries asking for information as to the conditions of employment of the men concerned in the all-grades movement. There was an extraordinary amount of work involved in them. As there were nearly 5,000 sheets, he placed the whole matter in the hands of experts, Mr. Layton and Mr. Liddle, of Cambridge University. The facts were not seriously challenged, and the critics played with the word " men " when boys were included. It was a large book of 136 pages, was priced at 5s. 6d., and came to be known as " The Green Book " in the controversial speeches and Press comments.

All overtures to the companies having been repulsed and every possible method short of a strike taken, it was a question whether the men should take the matter lying down or put it to the test of a struggle. They had been twice written to, and with varying verbiage the answers were the same, so the E.C. passed these resolutions:—

“ Moved by Rimmer and Topping :—

‘ In considering the replies that have been received from the railway companies in reply to our application in a letter dated July 20th, this Committee is surprised that chairmen and general managers still persist in saying that we wish to interfere with the discipline of the staff or management of the railways, and feel sure that there is some misconception of the true meaning of our request. We therefore desire that the proposals made by Mr. Bell at a public meeting should be given a trial, and ask the General Secretary to seek to get this proposal considered by the Railway Managers’ Association.’

“ Carried unanimously.

“ Moved by Bebbington and Harber :—

‘ That, after considering the present condition of the national movement, we consider the replies from the railway companies are such as meet with the entire disapproval of the railway service, and we therefore take a ballot of our members at the earliest opportunity to get the individual opinion as to whether they are desirous of withdrawing their labour at a given time for the purpose of enforcing the programme which has been submitted to the various railway companies. Ballot papers to be returnable to this office not later than October 28th next, and be scrutinised by this Committee.’

“ Carried unanimously.

“ Moved by Brodie and Murphy :—

‘ That this Committee meets on Monday, October 28th, at 2-30 p.m., and following days to scrutinise the ballot papers, and that the General Secretary be instructed to arrange for a consultation between the Provisional Committee and this Committee on Friday, November 1st.’

“ Voting.—For the resolution : All the Committee, except Rimmer and Topping, who voted against; and Beardsley and Emblem, who remained neutral.

“ Resolution carried.”

The result of the ballot was : For, 76,925 ; against, 8,773 ; neutral and spoilt, 2,436. The result of the voting of the G.R.W.U. was : For, 3,101 ; against, 84 ; spoilt papers, 11 ; papers not returned, 942. A meeting was held at the Albert Hall, which was without precedent in the history of the society. It was computed that 40,000 were present, and there were crowds outside unable to find an entry. The feeling was tense, as if life and death depended upon the result. Those outside called out “ Let the Bell ring for a strike,” and derisive cries were uttered against Lord Claud Hamilton. The most dramatic moment was when Bell announced the result of the ballot. He was of the opinion

that the neutrals would stand with their fellows, and the few spoilt papers were explained by the fact that some had voted but not put their grade; others had put them on both sides, wanting to be in the winning

The G.R.W.U. held a meeting in the Free Trade Hall at Manchester, where our dear old pioneers used to foregather in the foundation-laying. At this meeting it was computed there were 4,000. The same at Sheffield. Beardsley, the premier in the number of times he had been returned to the E.C., quoted from a Great Eastern ballot paper on which the voter had written: "The wages of sin is death, but the wages of the Great Eastern is starvation."

Bradford, Wakefield, Nottingham, Newport, York, and other places had large and enthusiastic meetings. At Llanelly J. H. Thomas was the speaker, and the reporter said "that speech will long be remembered by those who had the good fortune to be present." Many were unable to get inside the hall.

So sped the cause, and so great was the enthusiasm that David Lloyd George stepped in, and thus commenced another turning point in our history. It was not volubility of speech that was wanted now, but the seeing eye, the clear brain, with resourcefulness and talent for detail. Agitation largely gave way to statesmanship, and it brought in a sort of halfway-house to "recognition." Osborne became a secretary of some of these boards on the Eastern, which positions he retained after he left the service, and did good work on them.

The following is the history of the setting up of Conciliation Boards, the results of which—are they not written in the books of the chronicles of the A.S.R.S.? :—

"A Conference of Provisional Committees was held at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, on November 1st, when all the members were present, excepting J. Coady, of Waterford, and A. Hallen, of Dublin.

"After a full day's discussion, the following resolution was unanimously carried :—

" 'That this Conference of representatives of the railwaymen of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, whilst realising the grave responsibility involved in the declaration of a national railway strike, regret that the arbitrary refusal of the railway companies to meet our accredited representatives to even discuss a settlement by friendly negotiation leaves no other source open but to carry out the mandate of our members as disclosed in the result of the ballot, and we, therefore, recommend the Executive Committee to issue notice papers to the whole of the railway service.'

" MEETINGS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

"On the following day, November 2nd, the Executive Committee met to consider the above-mentioned resolution, but in the meantime a communication was received from the President of the Board of Trade, dated November 1st, inviting a few of the Executive Committee

and myself to meet him at the Board of Trade Offices at 3-30 p.m. on November 6th.

“ Under the altered circumstances the E.C. adopted the following resolution :—

“ Moved by Rimmer and Beardsley :—

“ ‘ That this Committee, after considering the resolution adopted by the Provisional Committees *re* the issue of notice papers, together with a communication received from the Board of Trade on the situation, decide to defer further action until November 6th, when a special meeting of this Committee will be held.’

“ Carried unanimously.

“ The Executive Committee met again on November 6th, when the General Secretary laid the following communication before them :—

“ ‘ Board of Trade, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,

“ ‘ November 5th, 1907.

“ ‘ Dear Mr. Bell,—With reference to your letter of to-day, Mr. Lloyd George asks me to say that he will be very glad to meet here to-morrow the fourteen gentlemen who form your full Committee. He suggests that he should lay before these gentlemen the broad outline of such proposals as, after his meeting with the railway chairmen, he may be in a position to communicate to them. Should these be accepted in principle, he thinks it would be desirable that, for the discussion of points of detail, with which he would propose to proceed immediately, you should select from your body a small committee of six, in addition to yourself, thus corresponding in number to the committee of railway chairmen whom he has recently been meeting at the Board of Trade. He would suggest also that the six to be chosen should, so far as possible, be representative of the several grades.

“ ‘ It may be convenient to you to make your selection before you arrive to-morrow, or he will place a room at your disposal here to which you can retire for the purpose after the general principles have been submitted to the full committee.

“ ‘ (Signed) W. H. CLARK.

“ ‘ Richard Bell, Esq., M.P.’

“ It was then moved by Rimmer and Topping :—

“ ‘ That we proceed to select six as a Sub-Committee to discuss with the President of the Board of Trade the details of the proposals he may submit for the settlement of the National All-Grades Movement.’

“ Carried unanimously.

“ Moved by Mayes and Topping :—

“ ‘ That Messrs. Beardsley, Harber, Rimmer, Murphy, Owen, and J. R. Bell be elected as the Sub-Committee.’

“ For : All the Committee, except those included in the resolution, who remained neutral.

“ Carried.

“ At the time appointed the full Committee, together with the General Secretary, had an interview with Mr. Lloyd George, who fully explained the circumstances which led to his intervention. He definitely stated that he was acting in the interests of the general community and that he was determined to avert a strike. Mr. Lloyd George further stated that he had got the railway companies, after much difficulty, to agree to the proposals he was about to submit to us. He desired that we should accept the principle and appoint a deputation of six, with the General Secretary, to remain and discuss the details. The Committee then retired to an adjoining room, and after a lengthy discussion, and giving full consideration to the whole circumstances, arrived at the following resolution :—

“ Moved by Rimmer and Harber :—

“ ‘ That the scheme of conciliation submitted to us, as agreed to by the railway companies with and through the President of the Board of Trade, be accepted and agreed to by us as representatives of the men, and that the deputation elected from our body to confer in the discussion of the details of the scheme under consideration are hereby vested with plenary powers to discuss and endeavour to get amended the details of the scheme in the best interests of our members.’

“ For : All the Committee, except Brodie and Emblem, who voted against.

“ Carried.

“ On November 7th the Executive Committee met at the Head Office and had before them the scheme submitted to them by the President of the Board of Trade and amended by the Sub-Committee, and finally agreed to and accepted by the representatives of the companies and of this society. After deliberating thereon, the following resolutions were adopted :—

“ Moved by Topping and Beardsley :—

“ ‘ That this Committee, having considered the full report of the scheme of conciliation as agreed to by the Sub-Committee in conjunction with the President of the Board of Trade, hereby accept on their behalf as an honourable settlement the scheme set forth, and we feel that the best interests of the members have been served, and trust they will give it a fair trial.’

“ For : All the Committee, except Brodie and Emblem, who voted against.

“ Carried.

“ Moved by Rimmer and Robinson :—

“ ‘ Adverting to the scheme of conciliation agreed to by this Committee through the President of the Board of Trade as a settlement of the dispute between our members and the railway companies, we instruct the General Secretary to have prepared and issued to our branches a circular setting forth the possibilities to be derived by the

utmost use of the full powers of the agreement, and urge our members to take advantage of the machinery provided by the society.'

" Carried unanimously.

" NORTH-EASTERN RAILWAY.

" In consequence of the North-Eastern Railway being differently situated to other railway companies in so far as this society is already recognised, the Executive Committee considered that an opportunity should be given the men of expressing their opinion as to whether they will take advantage of the new arrangements or adhere to those at present in operation. They, therefore, adopted the following resolution :—

" Moved by Brodie and Bebbington :—

" ' That, owing to the settlement between the railway companies and the men specified in the agreement drawn up by the President of the Board of Trade, and agreed to by both parties, this Committee instructs the General Secretary to call a meeting of the delegates of the North-Eastern Railway at Darlington on Sunday, November 17th, to discuss the situation and decide whether they will adhere to the arrangement now in force or take advantage of the conciliation scheme accepted as a settlement for other railways.'

" Carried unanimously.

" NATIONAL PROGRAMME.

" In further considering how the national programme may be submitted to the companies under the new scheme, the following decisions were adopted :—

" Moved by Topping and Swan :—

" ' That this Committee instructs the General Secretary that, where the delegates to the National Conferences are numerous enough to form a deputation to the companies, they be allowed to send in their programme and ask the directors to meet the deputation appointed by the men to discuss the same.'

" Carried unanimously.

" Moved by Harber and Beardsley :—

" ' That this Committee instructs the General Secretary to arrange for those grades who, owing to the small number of men employed, do not warrant a deputation of their own, to be included in other deputations to the advantage of the railwaymen generally.'

" Carried unanimously.

" TERMS OF SETTLEMENT.

" The undersigned duly authorised representatives of the railway companies named below declare that they are prepared on their behalf to adopt a system of conciliation and arbitration for the settlement of questions relating to the rates of wages and hours of labour of various classes of their employés, on the general lines of the scheme appended to this agreement.

" They will also use their good offices to induce the other railway companies to adhere to this agreement. Such adherence may be notified at any time within the next three months.

" (Signed)

STALBRIDGE.

ALLERTON.

ERNEST PAGET.

C. BINE RENSHAW.

ALEX. HENDERSON.

CLAUD J. HAMILTON.

W. GUY GRANET, Secretary of Committee.

" (Countersigned)

" D. LLOYD GEORGE.

HUDSON E. KEARLEY.

H. LLEWELLYN SMITH.

G. R. ASKWITH.

" RAILWAY COMPANIES ON WHOSE BEHALF THE AGREEMENT IS
ACCEPTED.

" Caledonian Railway Company.

Great Central Railway Company.

Great Eastern Railway Company.

Great Northern Railway Company.

Great Western Railway Company.

Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company.

London and North-Western Railway Company.

London and South-Western Railway Company.

London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Company.

Midland Railway Company.

South-Eastern and Chatham Railway Companies' Managing
Committee.

" THE MEN'S ACCEPTANCE.

" The undersigned duly authorised representatives of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants accept, on behalf of its members, the terms of the agreement with regard to conciliation and arbitration, signed this day at the Board of Trade by the representatives of the railway companies.

" (Signed)

J. R. BELL, President.

T. OWEN.

A. HARBER.

C. W. BEARDSLEY.

NATHAN RIMMER.

THOMAS MURPHY.

RICHARD BELL, General Secretary.

" (Countersigned)

" D. LLOYD GEORGE.

HUDSON E. KEARLEY.

H. LLEWELLYN SMITH.

G. R. ASKWITH.

" OUTLINE OF SCHEME FOR CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION.

" GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

" (a) Boards to be formed for each railway company which adheres to the scheme to deal with questions, referred to them either by the company or its employés, relating to the rates of wages and hours of labour of any class of employés to which the scheme applies which cannot be mutually settled through the usual channels.

" (b) The various grades of the employés of the company who are covered by the scheme to be grouped for this purpose in a suitable number of sections, and the area served by the company to be divided if necessary for purposes of election into a number of suitable districts.

" (c) The employés belonging to each section so grouped to choose from among themselves one or more representatives for each district, these representatives to form the employés' side of a Sectional Board to meet representatives of the company to deal with rates of wages and hours of labour exclusively affecting grades of employés within that section.

" (d) The first election of representatives to be conducted in a manner set out in the rules of procedure. Subsequent elections to be regulated by the boards themselves.

" (e) Where a Sectional Board fails to arrive at a settlement the question to be referred, on the motion of either side, to the Central Conciliation Board, consisting of representatives of the company and one or more representatives chosen from the employés' side of each Sectional Board.

" (f) In the event of the Conciliation Boards being unable to arrive at an agreement, or the board of directors or the men failing to carry out the recommendations, the subject of difference to be referred to arbitration. The reference shall be to a single Arbitrator appointed by agreement between the sides of the board, or in default of agreement to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Master of the Rolls, or in the unavoidable absence or inability of one of them to act, then by the remaining one. The decision of the Arbitrator shall be binding on all parties.

" DURATION OF SCHEME.

" The present scheme to be in force until twelve months after notice has been given by one side to the other to terminate it. No such notice to be given within six years of the present date.

" INTERPRETATION.

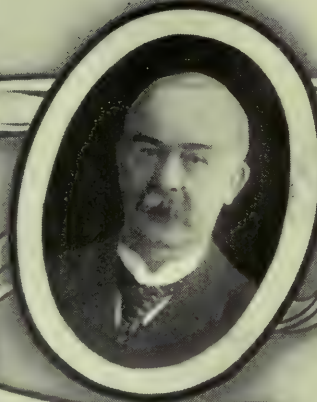
" If any question should arise as to the interpretation of this scheme, it shall be decided by the Board of Trade or, at the request of either party, by the Master of the Rolls.

" II. OUTLINE OF SUGGESTED CONSTITUTION AND PROCEDURE OF CONCILIATION BOARDS.

" N.B.—The following outline is intended as a general ' model ' to be amended in detail to suit the circumstances of particular companies.



J. Holmes.



W. Carter.



W. Halls, M.P.



R. Moffat.



E. Browning.



W. Hudson

ORGANISERS.

“ CONSTITUTION OF BOARDS OF CONCILIATION.

“ Boards to be constituted in the first place for the more important sections (the list to be subject to modification to suit particular railways).

“ The following are suggested merely as examples :—

“ *Railway A.*

- “ 1. Locomotive drivers, firemen, and cleaners.**
- “ 2. Signalmen, pointsmen, etc.**
- “ 3. Permanentwaymen, platelayers, etc.**
- “ 4. Traffic department men other than signalmen.**

“ *Railway B.*

- “ 1. Locomotive drivers, firemen, and cleaners.**
- “ 2. Signalmen and pointsmen.**
- “ 3. Goods guards and shunters.**
- “ 4. Passenger department guards, ticket examiners, shunters, and porters.**
- “ 5. Telegraph and permanentway.**
- “ 6. Goods checkers, porters, carmen, vanmen, stablemen, and labourers.**

“ [NOTE.—Variations may be made in the above classification, care being taken to provide, so far as possible, for the inclusion of other grades of wage-earning employés engaged in the manipulation of traffic on one or other of the boards.]

“ If the employés belonging to any section not included at the outset should desire hereafter to participate in the scheme they may make application to the Central Board, which, if it thinks it desirable, may either admit them to an existing Sectional Board, or arrange for the constitution of a new board.

“ The electoral districts to be based so far as practicable on districts already in existence for the purpose of the railway company (*e.g.*, district superintendents' or district goods managers' districts), which may, if necessary, be grouped for the purpose.

“ [NOTE.—It seems desirable that the districts should be as few as possible (preferably not more than four, and in no case exceeding six), in order to admit of two operative representatives instead of only one being elected for each district on each board. This will give opportunity for variety of representation—*e.g.*, for a fireman as well as an engine driver to be elected on Board I.—without unduly increasing the number of members of the boards.]

“ The term of office of a Conciliation Board to be three years. Casual vacancies through death, resignation, or loss of qualification to be filled by co-optation by the remaining members on the same side of the board.

“ ELECTION OF CONCILIATION BOARDS.

“ The following rules to apply to the first election. Subsequent elections to be regulated by the Conciliation Boards themselves :—

“ 1. Nomination papers proposing candidates for the various boards signed by not less than twenty adult employés belonging to the same section and district to be sent to the Board of Trade on or before a date to be arranged.

“ 2. The Board, after satisfying themselves that the nominations are in order, to prepare voting papers and arrange for them to be circulated to the adult employés on a given pay day.

“ 3. The Board of Trade to receive and count the voting papers of the men, and also to receive from the company a list of its proposed representatives on the various boards.* The result to be published with as little delay as possible.

“ [NOTE.—For the purpose of these rules ‘ adult ’ means a person aged twenty and upwards.]

“ * [NOTE.—It is desirable that at least one of the company’s representatives on each board should be a director.]

“ PROCEDURE.

“ Each side of a Conciliation Board to select its own chairman.

“ Every board to meet for business as required at the request of either side. A fortnight’s notice to be given of all meetings. No meeting shall be called in August or September.

“ Meetings to be convened by the secretary, who shall be appointed by agreement between the two sides of the board. Failing agreement, each side to appoint a secretary from among the employés of the company. The agenda to be circulated with the notices, and no question not on the agenda be brought up except with the consent of both sides.

“ Each side of a board to vote separately, and all decisions to be arrived at by agreement between the two sides.

“ MODE OF DEALING WITH APPLICATIONS.

“ Before a Conciliation Board can entertain any proposal for a change in the rates of wages or hours of labour of any class of employés, an application for such change must previously have been made in the usual course through the officers of the department concerned.

“ After any such application has been made by the employés they shall be informed, as soon as practicable, and in any case within two months, of the company’s decision with regard to the request, or of their desire to refer it to a Conciliation Board. In the event of the decision not being accepted, or of no reply being received within the specified time, the men may require the matter to be referred to a Conciliation Board, which shall at once be convened to consider the matter so referred.

“ [NOTE.—For the purpose of this rule the months of August and September shall not count.]

“ Any proposal agreed to by a Conciliation Board involving increased expenditure shall be placed before the directors for their acceptance at their next ordinary board meeting, or if that meeting takes place within a week of the proposal, then at the next meeting but one, and failing this, shall be referred forthwith to arbitration.

“ Any proposal agreed to by a Conciliation Board involving reduction of rates of wages shall be communicated to the men, and if rejected by them within a month shall be referred forthwith to arbitration.

“ Subject to the above provisos the decision of a Conciliation Board to be final and binding on the parties, and no decision to be reopened within twelve months.

“ Where a Sectional Board fails to arrive at a settlement, the question to be referred on the motion of either side to the Central Conciliation Board.

“ Should the Central Conciliation Board fail to agree, the question to go forthwith to arbitration at the request of either party.

“ Proceedings before the Arbitrator shall be regulated by him, including the period during which the award shall be binding.

“ EXPENSES.

“ In the absence of an agreement to the contrary, the expenses of arbitration proceedings and Conciliation Boards to be divided equally between the company and its employés.

“ [NOTE.—It is agreed that in order to keep procedure simple and inexpensive counsel should not appear in these cases.]”

“ AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF RAILWAY SERVANTS,

“ 72, ACTON STREET, GRAY’S INN ROAD, LONDON, W.C.

“ November 16th, 1907.

“ NATIONAL MOVEMENT.

“ TO THE BRANCH SECRETARY, OFFICERS, AND MEMBERS.

“ You will have observed from Press reports of Thursday, the 7th inst., that the national movement inaugurated at the Conferences held last year has been brought to a conclusion.

“ The report of the proceedings and negotiations which have taken place since the September meeting of the E.C., together with the terms of agreement, are attached hereto.

“ THANKS TO OFFICERS AND MEMBERS.

“ Before proceeding to explain the details of the scheme upon which the settlement was arrived at, I desire to express my most sincere thanks and appreciation to all officers and members for their arduous labours and admirable loyalty to the E.C. and myself throughout the long progress of the movement, without which the same results could not have been achieved. The campaign was a hard one, the opposing forces were numerous and some of them most powerful. Our natural

opponents were the powerful directors, and, of course, for what it is worth, the 'Free Labour' Association. But the severest of all was from a body to whom we had no right to look for opposition even if we could not expect support. I refer to the Associated Society. The action of that society throughout this movement has been a discredit to the Trade Union world. Were it not for their outburst of hostility, I have reasons to believe the dispute would have ended some time ago, and possibly to a better advantage. Their actions will, I hope, teach us all to act up to the old adage, 'Beware of your friends.'

" OLD METHODS OF NEGOTIATION.

" The settlement is not what we asked for, viz., recognition of our officials to negotiate on behalf of our members, but it is a tremendous advance and improvement upon the present methods of negotiation. At present, as everyone knows, the men have to submit their claims for improved conditions through the heads of departments in order to reach the board-rooms—a process sometimes occupying very many months. Even when the deputations reach there the results are far from satisfactory, and are not communicated to them for many weeks, sometimes months. Then, when the decisions of the directors are received, however unsatisfactory they may be, they are *final*. Even in the board-rooms the men are not on an equality with the directors and officials, because the men's delegates are always outnumbered.

" NEW METHODS OF NEGOTIATION.

" Under the terms of settlement a new and complete set of machinery has been set up to supplement the old. During the first stages the negotiations will be entirely on the same lines as at present, but instead of the directors' decisions being final, the men, if they fail to gain satisfaction, can refer their claims to the Sectional Conciliation Board. This board will be composed of equal numbers of representatives of the companies and of the men. Failing satisfaction from the Sectional Board, the matter may, on the motion of either side, be referred to a higher court, *i.e.*, a Central Conciliation Board consisting of representatives of the company and one or more representatives chosen from the employés' side of each Sectional Board. In the event of satisfaction not being obtained from the Central Board, the men can refer their claims to an Arbitrator, who shall be appointed by the Master of the Rolls and the Speaker of the House of Commons. Here the men may appoint their society officials or whoever they may choose to represent them, the decision of the Arbitrator being final.

" The process is not quite so cumbersome as it appears, because the directors must give their answers within two months, and the Sectional and Central Boards must be called together immediately a matter has been referred to them. Failing satisfaction from the Central Board, the matter may be referred to arbitration, when the Arbitrator must be immediately appointed. Thus a set of claims, if necessary, can be laid before the Arbitrator in about four months after they reach the directors.

“ ELECTION AND COMPOSITION OF CONCILIATION BOARDS.

“ The men who are elected to the Conciliation Boards must be in the employ of the respective companies. The first election on the men's side will be conducted by the Board of Trade, and this will be arranged as speedily as possible, but, naturally, there are many preliminaries and details to be arranged before the nominations can be invited and ballot papers issued.

“ In the meantime, every effort should be made to organise the men and be prepared for the elections. The society having been *entirely* and *absolutely* responsible for the construction of this new machinery its members are entitled to full representation on the boards, and I trust they will use every legitimate means in their power to secure that position.

“ If the new machinery is properly and efficiently used we may, then, look forward with much confidence to obtaining great improvements in the present conditions of the men. Those elected on the boards must be strong and able men. We have plenty in our society quite capable of filling these positions. It is for the members to see they are put there.

“ FUTURE MOVEMENTS.

“ Before starting movements in the future the sanction of the E.C., as in the past, must first be obtained, in order that the expenses necessary to conduct them and the costs of the men's side of the Conciliation Boards, and also the costs of the arbitration, if this stage be reached, may be insured.

“ ORGANISE ! ORGANISE !

“ It will not be sufficient to have the boards filled up with our members, but they must be representative of a strong organisation, and the non-members must be induced to join our ranks. The success of Conciliation Boards in the mining, engineering, shipbuilding, and iron industries is entirely due to the perfect organised state of the men. With complete organisation and *no sectionalism* amongst the railwaymen, I am convinced we can secure great reforms for our members in the future.

“ This is an important step forward in the history of our society. Let us use it wisely and well, and when the time comes for the scheme to be renewed I hope the men may then be permitted to elect whom they choose to represent them on the boards, whether they be in the employment of the companies or not.

“ CONCLUSION.

“ I hope we may have the same co-operation, cohesion, and loyalty during the future progress of this new era in the history of our society as we did in bringing it about. Some alterations will no doubt be required in our constitutional methods, but I ask for patience, so that any change necessary may be well and wisely made. The Head Office

will keep a watchful eye upon the developments, and, as usual, will be pleased to render every possible assistance. We may feel proud that without resorting to extreme measures a great step forward has been achieved, and in the progress of which I wish all God speed.

“Yours faithfully,

“RICHARD BELL, General Secretary.”

Nathan Rimmer was discharged for the following trivial thing: He was working the 9-15 p.m. Pemberton Colliery to Prestwich, and upon arriving at Crumpsall on the return journey he failed to see that his fireman went to the signal box (the signal being at danger) to carry out Rule 55 of the company's rules. A delay ensued, but Mr. Rimmer was under the impression that his fireman had gone to carry out the rule. Instead of this, however, the fireman had been to the front of the engine to shelter from the stormy weather. As a result of this delay, the fireman, guard, and signaller at Crumpsall were, in addition to Mr. Rimmer, discharged. The fireman and guard were also members of the society.

Of the many remarkable legal cases that we have taken up for enginemmen, that of Driver Gourlay was one of the most remarkable. The accident occurred at 3-30 p.m. on December 28th, 1906. In addition to Gourlay, Fireman Irvine and Kinnear, passenger, were all members of the Edinburgh Branch. Irvine lost his life with the twenty-two killed. On the 31st Gourlay was arrested, but the General Secretary took the matter up and he was allowed bail, and the society provided it. A wish was expressed that a public inquiry under the Fatal Accidents Inquiry Act (Scotland), 1906, should be held. The case was reported at full length in many issues of the “Railway Review,” but this condensed report of Mr. Bell explains, and which I give as being expressive of other like cases, that we were always prompt in taking action, making inquiry, and skilful in getting evidence, as in the Aylesbury disaster, when John Dobson obtained evidence, no one else knew from where or from whom, but which was very effective. Mr. Bell reported:—

“The first evidence taken went to show that a goods train broke loose halfway between Elliot Junction and Easthaven. The points at the latter place were out of order owing to the weather, and the engine had to cross at Carnoustie in order to try and shove the portion of the train which had broken loose up to the first part. The driver got on to the rear of the train by crossing again at Arbroath, but in pushing the train forward two of the trucks came off the road. These two trucks were shifted clear of the rails and left, and an attempt was then made to reach the front portion of the train with the remaining trucks. Whilst doing this the tender went off the road, and the up line was then completely blocked. It also transpired that all the signals were drooping, and communication between the different boxes broke down in consequence of the snow. It transpired from the evidence of Mr. Hamilton, manager of the joint line, that there were no fog

signalmen at work, neither was a list of the available men for fog-signalling kept at the stations or signal-boxes, in spite of the fact that such provision is made in the rules.

“ The line being blocked, it was necessary to work single line between Easthaven and Elliot Junction, and this working was commenced about 2 p.m.

“ The train our member Gourlay was driving was the through train from Edinburgh to Aberdeen, but on its arrival at Arbroath it was decided that it was useless for it to attempt to get any further, and that it should return. A start was made in a blinding snowstorm. The engine was running tender first, being unable to turn, and collided with a local train standing at Elliot Junction Station. There is a curve on the line near the station, and no extra precaution was taken to protect the train standing in the station.

“ The stationmaster in his evidence stated that he did not consider any extra precaution was necessary.

“ W. D. Hird, a draper, gave evidence to the effect that he saw a man whom he took to be a passenger get on the engine at Arbroath, take something out of his pocket, pour something into a vessel, and hand it to our member and his fireman. His inference was that it was something alcoholic. He also stated Gourlay seemed to be sober at the time.

An assistant spirit merchant deposed that Gourlay had threepenny worth of whisky in his bar at Arbroath between 12 and 12-30 p.m., and that he was perfectly sober.

“ A commercial traveller, who was in the express, stated that on seeking Gourlay to assist in releasing the fireman he found him in the company of a relative of Gourlay's, and the relative was decidedly the worse for drink. Whilst the three of them were walking down the platform Gourlay slipped, and a policeman came to his assistance. He could not say Gourlay was worse for drink, but his nerves seemed to be strung up considerably.

“ Shunter Esplin stated that he got on Gourlay's engine at Arbroath, and from his appearance concluded he had had some drink. He did his work all right, however, and did not smell of drink.

“ Guard Briggs, who got on the engine and remained there for a minute, formed the same opinion as the previous witness.

“ The guard of our member's train saw nothing wrong in his condition, neither did the assistant guard. Neither of these men was told definitely that the train was to travel at caution.

“ General Inspector McLellan, N.B. Railway, who travelled with the express, spoke to Gourlay twice before and once after the accident, and saw nothing wrong in his condition.

“ The foreman porter at Arbroath spoke twice to Gourlay, and saw nothing peculiar about him.

“ The signalman at Arbroath (South) stated that he duly cautioned Gourlay, and did not notice anything peculiar about him.

“ Police-sergeant Alexander stated that he saw Gourlay staggering on the platform after the accident and put several questions to him. He considered Gourlay was under the influence of drink.

“ A witness named Porter, who lives near the scene of the accident, stated that he procured a bottle of brandy for the wounded, and saw his nephew give some to Gourlay shortly after the smash.

“ Three doctors who were called to the scene of the accident examined Gourlay in the waiting-room shortly after the brandy had been administered to him, and gave evidence that in their opinion he was under the influence of drink.

“ The loco. superintendent gave evidence that Gourlay was a very reliable driver indeed, and his sobriety had never been questioned until a few days after this accident.

“ The loco. foreman at Edinburgh gave evidence to the same effect, as also did several other employés of the N. B. Railway Company, who spoke to Gourlay on the day in question.

“ Our member Gourlay, in his evidence, stated that he did not ask for his engine to be turned at Arbroath because he thought the road to the turntable was blocked, and in the run to Elliot at about fifteen miles an hour his engine was travelling tender first in a wild blizzard, which beat on his face. Neither he nor his fireman could see the signals, and he was depending on fog signals. When he got to the home signal it was off, and he was just applying his brake to stop at the platform when the smash came. He remembered receiving a stimulant from some gentleman he did not know, and in consequence of the shock and injuries he received he was in a dazed condition and he could not remember who spoke to him after the accident, or what was said. He remembered a gentleman getting on his engine at Arbroath and offering him something to drink, which he refused, but he had one drink in a bar at Arbroath between 12 and 1 o'clock. The coal on his tender was about eight tons, and interfered with his view. He had for years suffered from rheumatism, which interfered with his walking.

“ Dr. Charles Templeman (police surgeon at Dundee), Dr. Sang (Dundee), who attended to the injured in the Tayport disaster in 1881, and the accident at Broughty Junction in 1884, were called to give their opinion, and stated that anyone undergoing the experience of Gourlay might very well appear to be under the influence of drink even though they had never tasted it. The effect from shock and the effect from drink being very similar.

“ In giving their verdict, the jury found (1) that the driver (Gourlay) was at fault in not observing his instructions got at Arbroath; (2) the stationmaster at Elliot should have had fog signals on the line, and the stationmaster at Arbroath might have detained Gourlay's train

for a longer period; (3) there was a lack of appliances to keep the line clear in exceptional circumstances, and the want of proper supervision to see the rules of the line properly carried out contributed to the accident; (4) underground communication and speed indicators on all passenger trains should be considered.

“The inquiry lasted a whole week, and the Sheriff’s charge to the jury occupied three hours. It will be noticed that the question of drink was not mentioned by the jury in any way.

“After the inquiry was concluded I communicated with the Lord Advocate, pointing out that the three points in the verdict against the company should have preceded the point with regard to Gourlay, whose fault was incidental to the arrangements condemned. I expressed the opinion that it would be oppressive and harsh to take further action against Gourlay, and regretted that the Act under which the inquiry was held had not removed the possibility of criminal charges being made against men until they had been found guilty of culpable negligence. I also expressed the hope that steps would be taken at an early date to make the Scottish law at least as favourable as that in England.

“The authorities, however, decided to prosecute Gourlay for manslaughter, the indictment being served on February 20th.

“The following are copies of a question I put in the House of Commons and the reply:—

“To ask the Lord Advocate whether a public inquiry, under the Fatal Accidents (Scotland) Act, has been held into the cause of the accident to the ill-fated train at Elliot Junction on 28th December last; what was the verdict of the jury; if the jury found that the driver (G. Gourlay) was guilty of culpable negligence, under what circumstances or statute is the Crown taking criminal proceedings against him; why was he arrested before the Sheriff’s inquiry was held; and whether, in view of the anxiety and suffering caused to Gourlay, both mentally and physically, by having to undergo a third inquiry, he can see his way to advise the Crown to withdraw the prosecution.

“To which the Lord Advocate replied as follows:—

“A public inquiry was instructed by me in regard to this lamentable railway accident in which twenty-two persons lost their lives, and the inquiry was duly held. The jury returned a detailed verdict, which was published in full at the time, and of which I should be glad to furnish my hon. friend with a copy. Gourlay was found to have been at fault. He is being proceeded against under the common law of Scotland. Immediately upon the occurrence of the accident information was laid in ordinary course of law before the Sheriff at Dundee, and that judge granted warrant for the arrest of Gourlay. He applied to be liberated on bail, and upon the matter being brought to my notice his application was acceded to by the Crown and granted. With regard to the last portion of the question, I may explain that the facts

appear to Crown Counsel to be such as to make it proper that the case should proceed to trial. My hon. friend may rely upon the trial being conducted with absolute fairness, and he will, I trust, appreciate that it would not be in the public interest or in the interest of the accused that I should make a further statement.

“ The trial of our member took place at Edinburgh on March 11th and 12th, when he was represented by the same counsel. Mr. Williams, Assistant Secretary, also attended.

“ The Solicitor-General prosecuted, and evidence of a similar nature to that given at the public inquiry was produced, except that the prosecution, without giving any notice whatever to the defence, dropped seventeen of the witnesses originally cited, the majority of these being the individuals who gave evidence as to Gourlay's condition. Needless to say, we had taken great care to procure the best medical experts on the question of drink, but the action of the Crown authorities in suddenly dropping that theory rendered their attendance unnecessary.

“ The Solicitor-General argued that the accident was entirely due to Gourlay's neglect, and, so far as he could see, no one else was to blame.

“ The Lord Justice-Clerk, in summing up, warned the jury if they remembered anything that took place at the Arbroath public inquiry to dismiss it from their minds, and to deal with nothing except the evidence which they had heard in the case. He reviewed the evidence minutely. Referring to the home signal, he observed that, though it was down, under the caution system it was still a danger signal. Gourlay thought he was entitled to go beyond it to the signal box. With regard to the important question of fog signals, they had to ask themselves if these were necessary under the rule. If Gourlay was bound to treat every signal as a danger signal, was he entitled to rely upon fog signals being put down for him? As regards trains standing in the station, was it in accordance with the rules that fog signals should have been put down for their protection? He feared it could not be said so. On the other hand, Mr. M'Lellan said he never saw greater necessity for fog signals. If that was the view of the general superintendent of the North British line it could hardly be expected that his subordinates would be wiser or more careful than he considered right. All the same, that would not absolve a driver from being careful as regards speed. That, said his lordship in conclusion, was a serious case for the accused and a serious case for the public. If the jury were satisfied—if there was any reasonable ground which suggested itself to their minds for believing that the prisoner was not blameworthy and not neglectful, then they should acquit him of the charge. On the other hand, if they must accuse him of blame, then he was liable to conviction under this indictment.

“ The jury, after fifty minutes' deliberation, found our member guilty, by a majority—understood to be ten to five—but, owing to his unblemished character, and to the exceptional circumstances and

weather conditions, and the lax state of affairs at Elliot Junction, recommended him to the utmost leniency of the court.

“The Lord Justice-Clerk, in passing sentence, said: ‘Everyone must sympathise with the recommendation which the jury has given. Giving the utmost effect I can to the recommendation which they have made, I shall limit the period to the smallest sentence it is within my power to pronounce—five months’ imprisonment.’

“Moved by Swan and Rimmer:—

“‘That we heartily appreciate the efforts of the General and Assistant Secretaries in the defence of our member, Driver George Gourlay, arrested and criminally charged for being concerned in the Arbroath disaster. We sincerely regret, however, that the efforts have not been successful in securing his acquittal, and we express our deepest sympathy with him in his misfortune. We also desire to express our condemnation of the procedure under Scottish law. Under English law Gourlay would not have been arrested before a coroner’s inquest had been held, and if afterwards charged he would not have been convicted on the verdict of only a majority of the jury. We hope every effort will be made to remedy such harsh and unfair procedure in future, in the interests of our members and all other workers.’

“Moved by Brodie and Harber:—

“‘That, after hearing the report of Mr. Williams, Assistant Secretary, who represented this society at the trial of Bro. Gourlay, this Committee is fully convinced that every effort has been made on behalf of our member. Further, we extend to Mrs. Gourlay and family our sympathy in their sad trouble, and whilst we regret that our efforts on our member’s behalf have not been successful to secure his acquittal, we are glad to know that these efforts are appreciated by Bro. Gourlay and his family.’

“Carried unanimously.”

Mr. Bell issued to the branches a full report of what had been done for Gourlay. He was successful in getting his sentence reduced by two months, and in addition, an alteration in the application of the law in Scotland, to mitigate the possibility of arrest in like circumstances. He also communicated with the company to re-employ him, and they replied that it was their intention, but not as a driver. The cost to the society was £1,073 6s. 1d. The following letter was received and resolution passed:—

“RE ELLIOT JUNCTION DISASTER—GOURLAY’S DEFENCE.

“DEAR SIR,—I am obliged for your favour forwarding me six copies of your report to the society on this case. I duly forwarded same to senior and junior counsel. They ask me, after perusal of same, and I associate myself very frankly with their observations, to express to you and to Mr. Williams, the Assistant Secretary, their indebtedness for the very full and competent instructions you gave in connection with this defence. The attention to detail and the thorough guidance which you and Mr. Williams gave counsel

and myself on all technical questions applicable to railway working was of immense advantage in stating the case for Gourlay. In point of fact, had it not been for the unremitting efforts of yourself and Mr. Williams, and for the generous defence provided by your association, Gourlay would have been in a helpless plight. I am not to advert to the jury's verdict, but I must say this, that had it not been for the defence and your efforts thereafter it is highly improbable that only a sentence of three months' imprisonment would now be being enforced. It was entirely through the defence that the serious aspect of the charge, viz., that of drunkenness, was successfully disposed of, and through your instructions that counsel was able to show, whilst Gourlay in the eyes of the jury may have been at fault, that yet there were other factors in connection with the working of the line that also contributed to the disaster. These contributing factors, together with Gourlay's character, no doubt were the considerations that made a lenient sentence possible. After all, the charge was a serious one.

“Yours faithfully,

“(Signed) JOHN M. SOUTAR.”

“Moved by Harber and Topping :—

“ ‘That this Committee notes with pleasure the reduction of the sentence passed on Bro. Gourlay, concerned in the Arbroath disaster, and records with great satisfaction the success of the society in obtaining the alteration of the law in Scotland, whereby in future no railwayman will be arrested in the same manner as Bro. Gourlay. We appreciate the reply of the N. B. Railway Company to our General Secretary with regard to the re-employment of Bro. Gourlay by that company, and trust that suitable employment will be found for him. Further, we call the attention of our members and all railwaymen through our members to the value and necessity of the society in such cases, which is further borne out by the communication received by us from the solicitor who conducted this case.’

“Carried unanimously.”

Mr. J. R. Bell, J.P., was re-elected President for 1908. J. Holmes, Organising Secretary, fought a plucky fight at East Birmingham in the General Election, and though not elected obtained 5,343 votes. Nothing daunted, he undertook the contest of a by-election at Hull during 1907, when he obtained 4,512 votes as against the successful Liberal's 5,623, and the Tory's 5,382. Later, owing to ill-health, he retired from the electoral arena. Jim was ever a plucky fighter: whatever the fight he was engaged in, whether for Labour or for politics. In 1908 there was a by-election at Leeds, when the Labour Party there were at cross-purposes owing to Fox's attitude towards us, and which the headquarters of the Labour Party did not help. The result was :—

Middlebrook (Liberal)	5,724
Neville (Tory)	4,915
Fox (Labour)	2,451

The insufficient accommodation at Acton Street led the E.C. to instruct the Trustees to obtain another place, and they secured a site in Euston Road, which was built upon, the building being called "Unity House," the suggestion of that name coming from E. Charles, one of the Building Committee.

At the 1909 A.G.M. Mr. Mears was given a retiring allowance of 25s. per week, having retired through ill-health, and when he died his wife was granted 10s. per week.

During the agitation of 1907 Mr. T. T. Millman, who was a member of the A.S.R.S. but employed by the Associated, had a difference with Mr. Fox, their secretary, over the actions of the latter with regard to our movement. They quarrelled, and the E.C. of that body dispensed with Millman's services, whereupon Millman issued a circular explaining what, in his opinion, were the circumstances, when that society sought and obtained an injunction against its publication.

Perhaps the most expensive case ever undertaken by the society was that of Signalman Jones, of the Hasland Branch, against the Great Central, who claimed damages for wrongful dismissal, defamation, arrears of wages, and the refusal to give him a character. The cost to the society was £10,237 12s. 3d.

The A.G.M. of 1909 elected E. Charles as President, Mr. J. R. Bell, the President for that year having been elected Organiser. Mr. Bellamy was elected to preside over Congress and for the remaining part of the year. It was the most stormy Congress it was my privilege to attend. There were matters that came before that body on which there was strong feeling: The conduct of Mr. Bell, Mr. T. White's expenses, and the Ruskin College trouble arising out of the dismissal of Dennis Hird, the Principal of the College.

Mr. Bell was asked in one resolution for his resignation owing to his attitude toward the Right to Work Bill and the Amalgamation of Railways Bill in the House of Commons, and the Congress decided to hear the case of Mr. Bell in camera. The latter said that whatever they did he should make public his relation to that discussion.

It was carried that a verbatim report of the proceedings be taken.

The resolution asking for his resignation was lost by 25 to 32 against, whilst the amendment, that the best solution to the difficulty would be a Parliamentary Secretary, was carried by 32 to 25.

They also decided to affiliate with the General Federation of Trade Unions, when it was afterwards found difficult to carry this out, and it was left to the E.C. to determine when it should become operative. It never did.

Mr. Bell was at a later period offered by Mr. Churchill a post under the Labour Ministry, and he accepted it, and tendered his resignation to Mr. E. Charles, the President-elect for 1910, on December 31st, 1909, when it was considered at a meeting called for the 1st January, 1910, to consider the Osborne case, which also necessitated his resignation as a Member of Parliament.

“ 72, Acton Street, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.,

“ 31st December, 1909.

“ TO THE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

“ GENTLEMEN,

“ I beg leave to tender to you my resignation and to give notice that I desire to vacate my position as General Secretary of the A.S.R.S., in accordance with Rule 4, clause 13, and ask your favour to retire before the end of the term if necessary. If it should be necessary for me to leave before the expiration of the term I will take care to see that everything is left in perfect order when I hand over my keys to my most qualified assistant, Mr. Williams.

“ In severing my official connection with the society I do so with extreme reluctance and regret, and leave my office as if it were almost my home. I have been a continuous member for twenty-nine years, twenty-seven of which I have held office as a minor official of my branch, branch secretary, Organising Secretary, and over twelve years General Secretary.

“ During my membership I have seen many changes and experienced many difficulties. In 1882 the membership was very little over 6,000, when it was not an easy matter to be a member, to organise, or to work for reforms. The obstacles in our way were both numerous and great. It required courage and determination to carry the banner of the A.S.R.S. under those circumstances. Nevertheless, stalwarts were found in those difficult times who put their whole hearts into the work, believing our cause to be just and the work before us both important and great. We worked for the love we had for our cause, without fee or reward beyond the hope for our own emancipation from the oppressive conditions of those times, and we triumphed over all.

“ During my career with the society whilst in the railway service I was tested by temptation and intimidation; first, with a view of getting me to give up my efforts for a better position; and, second, to alarm me into giving up my efforts on behalf of my fellow workmen. But neither of these could induce me to relinquish my endeavours to emancipate my workmates in the railway service.

“ Whilst I was in the service of the Great Western Railway Company, and when the society had no paid officials, with the exception of the General Secretary, I organised and opened a dozen branches in South Wales, all of which are flourishing to-day. During the four years I was Organising Secretary I organised, opened, and resuscitated over a dozen branches in the south and west of England. In the Midlands I also succeeded in doing a little towards building up our great organisation. A most striking compliment was paid to me for my work in the south and west of England in a leading article in the ‘Railway Review’ for July 10th, 1896, by the late Editor of that paper.

“ When I first visited Birmingham in 1894 there was only one branch, with about 250 members. I did not relax my efforts until I had opened three others, each with nearly a similar membership. Birmingham is now one of our most important centres. Other branches I also succeeded in establishing in that neighbourhood. Nearly the whole of these are in a flourishing condition, and I leave them as small monuments to my humble though earnest efforts towards building up our powerful and influential society, all of which I shall look upon with much pride and affection.

“ During the twelve years of my General Secretaryship my efforts have been untiring in endeavouring to bring about a happier condition of things for those whose lives are spent in the railway service. Few General Secretaries of Trade Unions have worked harder, or met with greater difficulties, than I have during the same period.

“ Comparison in the conditions of employment of our members to-day and the time when I took office will show that my efforts have not been wholly unsuccessful. The hours of labour now are much more reasonable, and, happily, the numbers of accidents are greatly reduced. And, finally, one of our first objects, *i.e.*, conciliation and arbitration, has been accomplished. This will, I hope, in future be the means of securing still greater improvements in the conditions, both in regard to hours and wages, of those who toil and risk their lives in serving the public on our British railways.

“ Our success has been great when comparing the proportion of our membership to the number employed, and would have been greater if larger numbers of railwaymen had joined our ranks. Such a prospect will, I hope, be realised in the near future.

“ When I first entered the society there was no standard of hours in the bulk of the grades, and where it did exist a minimum of twelve hours was exceptional. Payment for Sunday duty and overtime was a very limited luxury. By the unceasing efforts of the society we have now, as a right, payment for Sunday duty for all men, also payment for overtime, whilst at the same time we have over 10,000 signalmen and shunters enjoying an eight-hour day. Such conditions of employment twenty-five years ago existed only in our imagination.

“ In 1897 I was personally successful in securing for the North-Eastern trainmen the principle of rate and a-half for the hours of duty between 12 midnight Saturday and 12 midnight Sunday, rate and a-quarter for overtime, each day to stand by itself, and a guaranteed day each time a man went on duty. These principles have since been largely extended to other railways and to other grades, particularly as a result of the arbitrations during the present year. Where they have not been completely obtained they have been closely approached, and the next effort will, I trust, be successful in securing these terms in full.

" I am also pleased that I have succeeded in securing a nine-hour day for some of the locomotivemen before leaving my office, and hope this may be the forerunner of the long overdue eight hours. I am also gratified to know that I have succeeded in obtaining a ten-hour day for trainmen on the North British Railway, and hope the same terms will soon spread to all other railways in Scotland.

" The great benefits which the society has conferred upon the disabled members through accident and old age, the succour given to widows and nearly 4,000 little fatherless children, the legal assistance given to thousands of members to obtain justice from their employers, compensation for accidents, and assistance to unemployed are such as cannot be fully valued, and is a work of which all must be proud.

" The organisation of the Head Office and the business of the society since I have been in my present office has been a work of some difficulty. It has, however, been successfully accomplished, and the efficiency to which it has been brought is a credit to a great Trade Union like the A.S.R.S.

" I have had the responsibility of piloting the society through many difficult crises. Since 1897—the last three years especially—this period has been to me one of enormous strain and fraught with grave responsibilities. The conduct and control of the great agitation in 1907, the formation of 167 Conciliation Boards on nearly fifty railways during the past two years, the collection and preparation of the enormous mass of evidence necessary for the arbitrations on eight of our railways this year, and the personal supervision thereof, has been a work entailing very severe mental and physical strain.

" I know I have not pleased everybody: no man ever did, and no man ever will, but I have done my best, honestly and conscientiously, with only one object in view, *i.e.*, the best interests of our members. All this, however, has been cheerfully undertaken because it is the work of my life and devoted to a worthy cause, and to sever my connection with it is a heartfelt hardship.

" During my career as General Secretary I have declined more than one invitation to other positions, more remunerative and less responsible than my present post, but I felt I could not leave a work to which I had given so many years of unceasing and ungrudging service, and I could not cut myself away from my great ambition to see, and my efforts to obtain, great reforms in the conditions of those with whom I had worked side by side in the railway service, and who, since, I have been delighted to serve.

" The new spirit which seems to have entered the society during recent years, however, indicates to me that a section of the members do not know of the difficulties to be contended with in building up the organisation and of our work of reform, and, therefore,

do not appreciate my past services, and to whom my future services are not likely to be acceptable.

“ For the past five or six years, and the last four especially, I have been subjected to increasing pressure to sacrifice my convictions, which developed into more drastic form at the last two Annual General Meetings, when efforts have been made to depose me, not in consequence of my inabilities or neglect of duty, for no complaints have been made against me in my administration of the society's affairs, but owing to the political prejudices of a section of the members, who appear to be determined to get rid of me. My position, therefore, has become more insecure than that of any railwayman, for by a snatch vote at an Annual General Meeting I may be thrown out of employment after my long service to the society.

“ Discipline of late seems to be entirely ignored, and the policy of ‘ forcing the hands ’ of those in authority has been substituted in its place. It is, therefore, impossible to conduct with any success the business of a great organisation like the A.S.R.S., and it seems as if the authorities at the head of the society are unable to enforce that discipline which is so essential to its prosperity. This state of things has appeared still more forcibly since my retirement from Parliamentary life, based upon a decision of the governing body. It is impossible for things to continue on these lines, otherwise the society must be seriously injured thereby.

“ I have, therefore, regretfully come to the conclusion that I had better not run any further risk of probably being deposed, or being the excuse for friction or insubordination in the government of the society, and it may—I hope it will—be to the best interests of all if I resign and hand over the reins of office to some successor whom the members may choose to elect, and trust that my services may find an opening in some other sphere of usefulness.

“ In doing so I beg to tender my most sincere and grateful thanks to all those members, branch and Head Office officials, the Head Office staff, and especially my esteemed assistant, Mr. Williams, who have rendered me their co-operation, and for the cordial and loyal support given to me, often in difficult circumstances, and without which my efforts could not have been successful. I am also mindful of, and most highly appreciate, the letters and resolutions I have received from thousands of our members, individually and collectively, expressing their continued confidence in me, their goodwill towards me, and promising to continue their loyal support. Such tributes are encouraging to any officer, but there seems to be so much unfairness (to use no stronger word) existing amongst many of the members, who are persistently harassing, that it makes it impossible for a man with self-respect and any individuality to tolerate indefinitely that which is discouraging to the individual and so injurious to the society's

welfare, and I feel that it will be better if I retire out of the way. But I appeal to my supporters not to allow any personal feeling to prejudice the future prosperity of the society. I ask them to continue their loyalty and support to my successor, whoever he may be, in the best interests of the society and the welfare of railwaymen generally.

“ I desire, further, to advise the younger members to remember that the power and influence of the A.S.R.S. have only been accomplished by perseverance, patience, hard labour, and many sacrifices. It must not be overlooked that it is immensely more difficult to build up the organisation than to destroy it. The present and future condition of things has been made easier by the enormous labour and sacrifices of members in the past, and the advice and counsel of those members who have experienced the difficult stages of the past, and by whose efforts the society has attained its important position to-day, are entitled to be respected and esteemed. It is upon the continuation of those efforts that the future prosperity of the society depends.

“ In handing you my resignation, I leave behind me a record of honourable and conscientious service, of which I am proud, and which, I hope, many may be able to appreciate.

“ I wish success to the noble objects of the A.S.R.S., and hope that its past and present influence and power may be overshadowed by its future success, which I shall always watch with keenest interest.

“ With best wishes for the welfare of a body of men surpassed by none, and for whose emancipation I have loved to labour.

“ I remain, yours faithfully,

“ Mr. E. Charles, President.”

“ RICHARD BELL.

It was moved by Fagg and Tugwell :—

“ That this Committee, having received the resignation of Mr. R. Bell, decide to accept the same with regret; and we desire to thank him, on behalf of our members, for the great and valuable services rendered to our organisation during his many years of official connection with our society.”

This was carried unanimously.

It was then moved by Messrs. Bancroft and Fagg :—

“ That this Committee decides to appoint Mr. J. E. Williams (Assistant Secretary) General Secretary *pro tem.*, should Mr. Bell find it necessary to vacate his position before our next meeting.”

Carried unanimously.

It was then decided to invite nominations to fill the office.

Just at this time there was a general feeling that Mr. J. H. Thomas, who had decided to contest Derby, was rushing the position, and that his action was subversive of discipline; but they did not know the

circumstances, and when they did know, were content. Thomas, in fact, was asked to stand. He replied with an emphatic negative. Mr. Holmes had fought unsuccessful fights, and he was the society's candidate, and it was only when Mr. Holmes definitely decided not to stand that Thomas consented. Mr. Thomas was wired for by the E.C., and when all the circumstances were explained the E.C. passed this resolution, moved by Henderson and Layton :—

“ That, it having come to our knowledge that Mr. J. H. Thomas is standing for Derby as a Labour candidate for Parliament in succession to Mr. Bell, this Committee, whilst recognising and regretting that no financial assistance can be given by the society, yet congratulate the electors of Derby upon the choice of so fine and capable a candidate as Mr. Thomas has proved himself to be by a long career of public usefulness, and wish him every success in his campaign.”

This also was carried unanimously.

He won the seat, and Wardle and Hudson retained theirs.

The members were quite convinced that in losing Mr. Bell they had lost a good pilot. His ability was freely recognised, even where his opinions were not shared. He steered the ship through troubled waters. He recognised quite early in his office as General Secretary the need for an authoritative voice, respect for the decisions of the governing bodies and himself. He saw the weaknesses of the organisation and did his best to strengthen them. He brought order out of chaos. He had that power of detachment that, after attending a meeting overnight, or after a weary day at a Conciliation Board, he could pass at once to other matters that needed attention. He had a capacity for taking pains and laying his plans, and giving his attention to details. He worked, thought, laboured for us, gave us of his best, and left us.

Looking back upon those years and upon the storm he gathered around himself, one asks why this opposition? I think it was this. His way was *the* way, and to question it was something like challenging the old divine right of kings. He had not enough velvet on his glove. He did not give the soft answer that turneth away wrath. He had the touch of the autocrat. He aimed at success and took the path he thought best to achieve it; and all who stood in his way lacked intelligence. He would sail dangerously near the wind to bring in his ship. But this is to be said: He had Herculean strength; he never spared himself, never seemed to count time spent in labour; he was there, he was here, he was everywhere where anything needed doing, and he did it.

“ Who shall succeed Bell? ” was the question of the hour. The popular choice was J. E. Williams. He had been delegate to Annual Meetings, he had been E.C. man, Auditor, Assistant Secretary, and all men held him in their hearts. They loved him, and no man that had ever been in any position up to that time carried more profound respect of the members. He had character, he had charm, and he bound others to him as with hooks of steel. He was, however, of a retiring nature, and had no eye to the chief officership of the society. He was not

ambitious, except it was for service; and he had served Labour, surmounted physical difficulties with a cheerfulness and courage that few could imitate. His friends almost compelled him against his wish to offer to lead the railwaymen. Persuasion did prevail, and some of his friends issued this :—

“ AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF RAILWAY SERVANTS.

“ ELECTION OF GENERAL SECRETARY.

“ FELLOW MEMBERS,

“ In the selection of a General Secretary to our ever-increasingly popular society, every member will appreciate how essential it is that careful consideration should be given to the qualifications of candidates aspiring to that important position.

“ It is, while fully realising this importance, that this appeal is made on behalf of our present General Secretary *pro tem.*, Mr. Jas. E. Williams. In soliciting your support for Bro. Williams, we are not doing so for an unknown and untried person. It is doubtful if any other member has had such a long and varied experience in the society's government as Bro. Williams.

“ He joined the society when but a youth, in 1875, and has been a continuous member since (thirty-five years). He has, therefore, spent the whole of his adult life in the service of the society. In 1878 he was elected secretary of the Pontypool Branch, and held that position for twenty-five years, until he was appointed to the position of Assistant General Secretary.

“ He has attended as delegate numerous Annual General Meetings, and our older members will be familiar with the many reforms he was instrumental in effecting.

“ He has served two periods on the Executive Committee, being Chairman of that body in 1890. On three separate occasions he has been elected Auditor to the General Funds, and it was he who was instrumental in establishing the Finance Department of the society.

“ Since his appointment as Assistant General Secretary (seven years ago) it is correct to say that he has performed his duties with unprecedented fidelity and care. Never once has there been a complaint registered against him; but, on the contrary, at each successive audit high compliments have been paid to the efficient manner in which he has managed the financial affairs of the society. In all his transactions a high standard has been observed. Bro. Williams is prompt, steadfast, cautious, and level-headed, possessing sound judgment and wise discretion, and in every way possesses those high qualifications that peculiarly fit him for the important position of General Secretary, which involves the prestige of the society.

" It is, therefore, with absolute confidence we strongly recommend his candidature for your support.

" Yours faithfully,

" W. E. TURNER, J.P. (Bury No. 1).

T. J. ROBINSON (Newport).

J. WHITE (Toton).

S. LAZENBY (Kentish Town).

JOHN M. CUTHBERTSON (Glasgow.)

HENRY MORLEY (Newton Heath No. 1).

F. WALSH (Ardwick).

W. BANCROFT (Sheffield).

JOHN JONES (Pontypool).

T. WARD (Belfast).

WILLIAM HULME (Altrincham).

R. MOODY (Malton).

JOHN MCCANN (Oldham Road Branch).

**REUBEN BEBBINGTON, 7, Lotherton Street,
Harpurhey, Manchester."**

The result of the voting was as follows :—

J. E. Williams 24,567

W. Hudson 17,970

W. Hart 1,244

Chapter XXI.

OUR FIRST NATIONAL STRIKE—NATIONAL INSURANCE TROUBLES—A STRENUOUS YEAR.

WE asked "What shall he do, that cometh after the king?" because what Mr. Williams said of Mr. Bell was true: "During his term of office he revolutionised the whole system of management at the Head Office and effected many substantial reforms in the government of the society, including additional benefits to our members without increasing the contributions. It was during his period of office that the society passed through the most critical periods of its history and accomplished its great successes. The skilful manner in which Mr. Bell organised and conducted the all-grades movement will stand out boldly as a monument of unsurpassed statesmanship. His success in conducting the nine arbitration cases in the space of thirteen months was also an accomplishment which few persons outside the legal profession could have undertaken. But his enthusiasm for the cause for which he had so many years laboured, his Herculean physical strength, his strong mind and character, together with his well-balanced judgment, were possessed by only a few of his class."

It was a true and well-deserved tribute to his predecessor, and no prejudice against him for his political attitude can rob him of this garland which Mr. Williams placed upon his brow. But now, in a closer degree, he, too, has to steer the ship, soften, perhaps, asperities, do new things in a new way, face old difficulties and new, do his work, and go on rest. Troubles were ahead of him, and we shall see in what spirit he faced them, bore them, and overcame them; because just ahead, in 1911, we glide into the most eventful period of our history up to that time.

There was work, work everywhere. The Osborne case was dragging its weary way, and a whole series of events deep and far-spreading in the Labour world, and in his first year two General Elections took place, and vast changes were made in the political situation. Labour accepted the judicial and Parliamentary challenges and asserted itself and sought supremacy. The confronting tasks were not easy. Difficulties were about the path, in ours more than others, but the voluntary method of Parliamentary contribution caught on, which made things easier, and the Labour Party came also to see that excessive rigidity hindered initiative and the development of individual talent, and they eased off somewhat, better leaguings against the leaguers that then abounded; and they confronted them without any abatement

of their political power, which rather increased. They met money power with money, organisation with organisation, and they contributed over £3,000 towards the Osborne expenses.

Williams, however, had one sure asset in the very early part of his career as General Secretary in the election of J. H. Thomas. He was not only a willing helper to his chief, but supplied qualities that he himself lacked. It was one of the most hopeful phases in the long road of our changing history. Here was the most youthful aspirant for service that we had had, and, perhaps, for ambition, without that overweening vanity that so characterises many. He had up to the present made no blunder. The youth of the 1898 delegacy had soon stepped into the Executive Committee-room, became President twice, was fated not to fulfil his term because he was called to the higher sphere of Organiser, then Member of Parliament, thus helping Williams the more by his intimate contact, which provided no conflicting views or methods of policy. It was all achieved in a mere breath of time. He was observant, tactical, energetic, saw two ways of getting to a possible road, if the first path failed him. If it was chance to take a low estimate, then chance ruled on the right side; if merit, his hand snatched it. And so this most useful adviser, administrator, and worker had bounded forward and landed on the right-hand side of his chief, whom he loved. Other factors came in: it may have been his affection for his chief or a matter of tactics, but having been nominated for the chief office he withdrew when Williams himself was nominated. It was true comradeship and loyalty to an organisation, and Thomas imitated Williams himself with Bell, only that Bell had less need, because his strokes were swift and sure. It was something like what happened in the office of the "Pall Mall Gazette," when Morley was chief and Stead his assistant. They would meet together in the morning, discuss the world's affairs, beat their music out, and go to the world with undivided utterances. These two (Williams and Thomas) did the same—compared, decided, executed—and if opinions and decisions were challenged there was identity of utterances and administration. If Williams was challenged his assistant defended. They would take all the bearings of any question, gauge in what direction they should move, and if circumstances did not stalk in the direction assumed an alternative path was taken as the lesser of the best. And so it came to be assumed because Thomas was out and about and the chief in his office, that Thomas was the controlling power. It was the acme of joint working.

The reward of this was seen in the 1911 period, so that in the most eventful year of our history, up to then, with its many happenings, they had not to recast forms, methods, and policies. They met them, conquered them, and achieved.

Thomas, even before his election to Parliament, was transferred to London, the governing body having the prescience to see the necessity for a capable organiser, and sent Carter west in his place. They doubled their power by transfer.

Thomas, Wardle, and Hudson had been re-elected in that year of two elections, which was a heavy strain upon the Labour funds, but it was met successfully.

Nothing had suffered from the Osborne judgment, only that pessimism had a good innings. It was a check to the free path we wanted to take, but it wrought for freedom, which, in substance and fact, was what Osborne wanted. Osborne, when Parliamentary contribution came by choice, considered his work was done. Let it be said, in judging Osborne, that when Passmore was in conflict with the union he went to Osborne for assistance, and Osborne told him in forceful language what he thought of him, and that he had no quarrel with the A.S.R.S. as an organisation; that he thought all railwaymen should belong to it; that they should exercise oversight in its affairs in a more active manner than they had; that his action against them was because he thought it impinged upon the liberties of the citizen. So also when Thomas had a law case with the Associated, Osborne received an anonymous letter with the Leeds postmark asking him to take action, because this was a waste of the A.S.R.S. funds. Anonymity cannot have the luxury of a reply, or, from what I know of Osborne, it would have been emphatic enough.

Williams was hardly seated in his chair when resolutions came from branches asking that the General Secretary should not hold dual positions; that all the trouble that had arisen in the past years was as a result of that. They needed not to be anxious. No man was less desirous of being in the limelight; no man was more anxious to serve his fellows; and he gave his service with a purity of life that never had a stain upon it. He knew the railway world would take all his time, and he looked out upon it and devoted himself to it.

The E.C. of that time showed no favour, only to merit. They even fined the two Derby branches because they acted in contravention of the rules in issuing circulars for the candidature of Thomas, who had taken up the fight without the proverbial shilling; and events justified his faith that such would come. At this time, as an experiment, the alternative method of voting on the transferable vote had taken place in the election for the Scottish Trades Union Congress, on the initiative of Mr. Bell during the waning hours of his official position. The E.C. ruled it out, deciding that the first vote should be the deciding one by the old method, and that no one had any right to alter methods but the E.C. or the A.G.M., though they admitted that the system was a good one. The result in both cases worked out the same. There were sixteen candidates for the two offices, the first five obtaining over 200 votes were: R. Baxter, 398; J. Stobbie, 378; W. Stewart, 233; J. Marchbank, 232; W. Montgomery, 208. With the transferable vote in operation, Baxter had 637 votes and J. Stobie 378. It eventually led to the adoption in all future candidatures where there was a plurality of candidates. My readers will remember how that J. Baxter Langley had advocated that system in 1872 for the first

election that took place in our history, which was for the General Secretaryship.

A Departmental Committee had been set up to inquire into the question of some proposed amalgamation of railways, and watchful eyes, noting it, thought it a matter that concerned Labour as well as capital, the companies tendering evidence for amalgamation, the alleged cause being the increasing expenses. Mr. Williams collected and collated evidence, and brought before the Committee the working cost of fourteen companies during ten years, showing that during that time ten of them showed a decreased expenditure of 1½d. in the £ takings, and that only four of them showed a slight increase, over-capitalisation being given as the reason.

The society, in turn, urged the nationalisation of the railways as a better proposition than amalgamation. To that end the E.C. instructed Mr. Williams to engage writers to draft a small pamphlet to enable us to circulate it for propaganda purposes. He engaged Mr. Wardle and Mr. Pease, the secretary of the Fabian Society, to each write one, and the E.C. chose the one prepared by Mr. Pease, which, after a few verbal alterations, they printed and circulated. Since then the aim of the nationalisation of railways has been a part of the declared policy of the society.

Amalgamation proposals still kept coming forward, and conference after conference had been held. Proposals for this were submitted to the G.R.W.U. members, and there voted in favour 1,152, against 1,972. Blank papers returned number 19, spoilt 59, not returned 3,154. An unofficial paper, called the "Railway Worker," emanating from Leeds, in its sixth monthly issue, had said in reference to this: "The other unions had never made any real attempt to organise railwaymen," and in the next issue a front-page article headed "Amalgamation or assimilation! Which?" and it expressed itself as being astounded at the conference settlement of terms: "We cannot help expressing our disapproval of an agreement that will debar one-tenth of our present members from any active participation in the work of the amalgamated body. And, by the way, who is the amalgamated body? What is its name? Is it to be a workers' union or a servants' union? This apparently has not been considered. Are not the letters "A.S.R.S." sufficient for all, before which the dignity of the G.R.W.U. must bow?" "To the representatives of the A.S.R.S. who have assisted in the drawing up of the agreement we offer our congratulations. They have at least done well from their point of view." This would be a factor against the vote. But wait—

"Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore;
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more."

Eyesight testing complaints, always with us, came up just at this time in an acute form. Members who had been either suspended or dismissed on account of their failure to pass the system imposed upon them had gone to their own medical men, and

in numerous instances, where they had failed to pass the companies' tests, were successful in passing those set by their own medical men. Questions were asked in the House of Commons, and details of men having been rejected by the company but passing the other test were tabulated for action. As in most cases, the society, always willing that kindred societies should share in both the work and the honour of "something attempted, something done," invited the Associated to act with them in this matter. The correspondence which followed speaks for itself. On one other occasion, when negotiations were going on, Mr. Fox wrote: "Mr. Bell has no authority to act for us," which led someone to say the gist of the matter was in the postscript. The folly of it lay in the reference to an "all-grades vote." It was very silly:—

" 6th April, 1910.

" Mr. A. Fox, A.S.L.E. & F.

" RE MEDICAL TEST.

" DEAR SIR,—My Executive Committee, at their meeting last month, had under consideration the medical tests which are now being adopted by the various railway companies in connection with their staff.

" I have been requested to communicate with the various railway organisations for the purpose of concerted action being taken with a view to a satisfactory solution of this very important question. It must be apparent to all that unless some united action is taken the position of railwaymen will be seriously jeopardised.

" I shall be glad, therefore, to know that your society is prepared to take joint action with this society to arrive at some basis of co-operation in the matter.

" Yours faithfully,

" J. E. WILLIAMS."

" 8, Park Square, Leeds,

" Mr. J. E. Williams, A.S.R.S.

" 7th April, 1910.

" RE MEDICAL TEST.

" DEAR SIR,—Your C.P. 6,209 of the 6th instant shall be laid before my Executive Committee when they meet, and their decision shall be communicated to you in due course.

" Yours faithfully,

" A. Fox, per H.S."

" Mr. A. Fox, A.S.L.E. & F., Leeds.

" April 8th, 1910.

" RE MEDICAL TEST.

" DEAR SIR,—I am in receipt of your communication 51/937 of the 7th instant, and desire to thank you for your reply.

" I shall be pleased to receive the decision of your Executive Committee in due course.

" Thanking you,

" I am, yours faithfully,

" J. E. WILLIAMS."

" 8, Park Square, Leeds,

" April 18th, 1910.

" The General Secretary, A.S.R.S., 72, Acton Street, W.C.

" RE MEDICAL TEST.

" DEAR SIR,—My Executive, in considering your letter C.P. 6/209, resolved as follows: 'That, seeing this grievance has been in existence for some time, and has already been taken up by this society with the various railway companies and the Board of Trade, and as we are still actively engaged on this subject and have every means and machinery in this society to deal with it, we see no reason to alter our policy. Further, co-operation is out of the question on any subject so long as the loco. question is discussed and disfranchised by an all-grades vote.'

" Yours faithfully,

" A. Fox, General Secretary."

" Mr. A. Fox, A.S.L.E. & F., Leeds.

" April 19th, 1910.

" RE MEDICAL TEST.

" DEAR SIR,—I am in receipt of your letter of the 18th inst. (51/131) with reference to the above subject, in which you state that you have every means and machinery to deal with the question, and that co-operation with this society is out of the question.

" With this decision I am very much disappointed, having regard to the fact that there appears to be no abatement in the enforcement of this test, and the serious consequences which must accrue to the men unless some stronger measures are adopted to those hitherto.

" Your letter shall be submitted to my E.C. at their next sitting.

" Yours faithfully,

" J. E. WILLIAMS."

They carried their aloofness and splendid isolation so far that they sought a separate interview in 1911 with the President of the Board of Trade. He humoured them and gave them a separate interview on the same day that he received a deputation from Mr. Lowth, of the G.R.W.U., Mr. Chorlton, of the U.P.S.S., and Mr. Walkden, of the R.C.A. The President agreed upon the points of their representation, and failing the acceptance of the deputation's proposals—

" That in future eyesight tests shall be uniform and practical in character, with the semaphore signals, flags, and lamps in use on railway, and

" That the following clauses in the report of the Royal Society on Colour Vision of June, 1892, be given effect to, viz.:—

" (a) That a candidate rejected for any of the specified employments should have a right of appeal to an expert provided by the central authority, whose decision shall be final.

“(b) That a candidate who is rejected for naming colours wrongly, but who has been proved to possess normal colour vision, should be allowed to be re-examined after a proper interval of time.

We asked for the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry into the present tests with recommendations for a better system.

“ MEDICAL TESTS.

“ 1. To ascertain from the President whether any, and if so what, action the Department has taken in connection with medical examination of railwaymen, following upon the Shrewsbury disaster, and Mr. Lloyd George's statement thereat.

“ And if any consultation or conference has been arranged with the railway companies, or British Medical Association, to urge that upon a subject of such vital importance to railwaymen, that the men's societies should be consulted.

“ 2. To represent, that while not denying the necessity of railwaymen's physical fitness being guaranteed, we point out that the strain upon the men to-day is the result of the increasingly harassing nature of their work, and that it is the duty of the Board of Trade to see that this pressure is relieved by lessening the hours of work.

“ 3. That in the event of medical examination by the company's medical examiner resulting in disqualification, the right of appeal to some independent public expert to be provided.

“ 4. That many of the breakdowns in the railway service to-day are due to the onerous responsibility of the work, and we ask the President of the Board of Trade to institute an inquiry into the number of failures of all grades of railwaymen during the last five years.

“ 5. That all such failures be included under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

“ It was also agreed that Mr. J. H. Thomas, M.P., introduce the deputation, which was accompanied by Mr. W. Hudson, M.P., and the General Secretary.

“ At the interview the President was accompanied by Lieut.-Colonel H. A. Yorke, R.E., C.B., and Mr. W. F. Marwood, Secretary to the Railway Department of the Board of Trade.

“ After a full discussion, Mr. S. Buxton, M.P., said he would carefully consider the matters laid before him, and would communicate his views thereon later. He suggested that before any definite steps were taken in connection with eyesight testing that it would be better to wait and see the results of the deliberations of the Departmental Committee which he had appointed to consider this subject as affecting the mercantile marine.”

Arising out of victimisation cases, the society prepared a Bill for presentation to Parliament for the establishment of Industrial Courts, which would decide these cases. Mr. Brace, of the Miners' Federation,

had also prepared a Bill for the same purpose, which the Trades Union Congress fathered. Our own A.G.M. passed the following :—

“ That we note with satisfaction the decision of the Trades Union Congress bearing upon the establishment of Industrial Appeal Courts, as advocated by this society; and recognising the necessity for still further pressure being brought to bear upon Parliament, instruct the Executive Committee to give this matter their careful consideration, and take such steps as they may deem expedient or advisable in order to advance the establishment of this necessary reform.”

During the year there had been a growing discontent with the machinery of the Conciliation Boards. They were expensive. Events in the industrial world moved quicker than they could move with them. It would seem also as if the officials, by their arbitrary methods of interpretations and other vexatious proceedings, sought to bring them into contempt. It looked as if they wanted dictation to emanate from them. The discontent found expression at the Barry Congress, and Mr. E. Charles, the President, voiced the general views in his presidential address. He said :—

“ CONCILIATION BOARDS AND ARBITRATIONS.

“ Since the last Congress three more arbitrations have taken place on the North Stafford, the Caledonian, and North British Railways. The advocate for the men in each of these was Mr. Bell.

“ With the exception of Ireland, these practically conclude the settlement either by arbitration or direct agreement of the claims of the National Programme upon all the railways, and we are able to survey the general results obtained, and to judge the working of the new machinery. It may be at once said that the scheme of conciliation and arbitration has not been given a fair trial. The railway companies have not brought to the operating and administration of the arrangements that spirit of conciliation which, as one of the parties to the agreement, we had a reasonable right to expect from them. The long delays interposed to meetings of the Conciliation Boards, the points of advantage which several companies insisted upon reserving to themselves while denying similar facilities to the men, gave rise to a feeling of irritation that seriously hampered the harmonious working of the Board, and produced in many quarters deep resentment and dissatisfaction. After all the unfair manipulation of the scheme by the companies, and the defects in its construction which experience of its actual operation has disclosed, the new methods in some important particulars place railwaymen in a superior position to that they previously occupied, in dealing with their conditions of employment. A meeting between representatives of the men and the chief officers of the company to discuss grievances is now guaranteed without indefinite delay, and should no agreement result from these direct negotiations, an automatic release from a deadlock is provided by reference to an independent and outside authority, and before this final Court of Appeal the right of official recognition of the union

officers is secured to the men. These are three important points of advantage which we did not previously possess that should not be lost sight of.

“ In the results generally obtained from the arbitrations or direct settlements, although in some substantial concessions were gained, complete satisfaction has in no case been given.

“ The claim for an eight-hour day has failed, and we must turn attention to other agencies to secure this highly necessary reform in the railway service. The demand for a higher standard wage for the lower paid grades in the service has not been generally conceded, and the startling statement in the Railwaymen's Charter that 100,000 railwaymen were working for less than £1 a week is substantially true to-day, to the shame and condemnation of railway administration.

“ On the other hand, the claim for an enhanced rate for overtime and for Sunday duty has been almost universally granted.

“ Unsatisfactory, however, as the awards have been, we were prepared to abide honourably by them until the time of their operation had expired, if the railway companies acted in the same spirit and administered the awards fairly. Unfortunately, however, the companies have not done this. They have placed their own interpretation upon them and refused to meet the men's representatives to discuss the points of difference, and some of the companies have even denied the right of the men to have any opinion as to the intention and meaning of the arbitrator. The unfairness of the situation thus created is obvious. The railway companies possessing the superior position put into operation their interpretation and paid the men upon that basis, and the men's delegates were deprived of any opportunity of having their views considered.

“ The greatest discontent consequently resulted all over the country, which reached a dangerous stage in many districts and on many systems.

“ Appeals were repeatedly made for full meetings of the Central Board to discuss these disputes of interpretations, and if the Central Board were unable to agree to refer the points to the arbitrator to explain the meaning of the disputed clauses, but all to no purpose.

“ It was not until the Board of Trade had been approached and had expressed its opinion that the companies receded from their arbitrary position and agreed to recognise the men's side of the Central Board as one of the parties to the bargain, and, therefore, having an equal right to have their view of the arbitrator's award considered.

“ It is to be very much regretted that the companies could not see the justice and wisdom of adopting this course at the commencement, and thus have avoided much unnecessary friction and disturbance.

“ The companies have been merely taking advantage of the absence of a specific provision on this point in the Board of Trade scheme. No one at the time of signing that agreement ever anticipated the companies would take up such an unfair and unreasonable attitude. Provision

to meet this and other points will have to be included in the scheme if, and when, it comes to be renewed."

During the year the Great Eastern men had held a protest meeting condemning the farcical proceedings of the Boards on the G.E.; and the men were not in a very pleasant mood. The company had refused to bring in Lord Gorrell to give his interpretation of the award, and the men made threats of a strike. The Great Northern men and also the North British were in nearly the same circumstances, which showed that things were not working smoothly. In all there were meetings of protest from five companies' men in one week. The companies, however, came to see that this would not do, and they slightly amended their ways.

On September 18th the new offices at Euston Road were opened by Mr. Sidney Webb, the historian of the Trade Union movement, who complimented us on the magnificent offices he had the pleasure of opening. He reviewed the society's work, the Trade Union movement generally, noted the changes that had taken place in the passing years, and pointed out the needs of the present. A small souvenir history of the A.S.R.S. was presented to each of the guests. Two of the old pioneers who formed a part of the first General Meeting of the society were present—John Abbott, of Wigston, and Robert Salmon, of Birmingham, both of whom are now dead.

The vote for Assistant Secretary was as follows:—

J. H. Thomas	20,113
W. Hart	10,411
G. W. Brown	5,710

giving Mr. Thomas a clear majority of 3,992 over the combined votes of the other two contestants.

The first year of office for Mr. Williams—1911— was an arduous one. It had been a year of Labour unrest, which the two General Elections had somewhat obscured. Mr. C. T. Cramp was this year elected for the E.C. in Group 8. He had been a delegate to the Leicester Congress, where, sitting as I did in the gallery at that Congress, I predicted a future for him. One could see he took pains to inform himself of all matters that came before the Congress, expressed himself clearly, and kept himself cool during its stormy periods. Owing to the fusion he had as E.C. man, with his after position as President, the longest rôle of any man at that body's deliberations.

During the year there was a most remarkable uprising of so spontaneous a character that few seemed to know just what the assigned cause of the strike was, and in a remarkably short time 6,000 men were affected. It broke out at Newcastle and Gateshead on July 18th, and soon other places became involved, with a likelihood of still more. But the mediation of Mr. Williams and Mr. Thomas was successful in getting the men to go back. The "Railway Review" said of it: "It is doubtful if in the whole history of industrial disputes there was ever so spontaneous an uprising, so sudden in its beginnings, so wide-spread in its ramifications, and so rapid in its infection. And all for

what, in and by itself, seems so trivial a cause. From beginning to end the psychological factor was evident. One newspaper describes the strike as a study in 'the psychology of the crowd,' and in many respects it strongly resembles those outbursts of popular fury which we read of in ancient Rome or modern Paris. It was as sudden in its beginning as it was in its ending, and apparently as inexplicable. The ostensible cause was the dismissal or suspension of a shunter, but the real significance of the strike lay in its passionate protest against what the men believed to be a case of injustice, in which their honour as men who were called upon to defend an injured comrade was involved."

We may pass an obituary of the year in the words of Mr. Williams, who said :—

" . . . This statement gives evidence of great things done, it represents but a small fraction of the year's accomplishments. It is not possible to estimate what evils the society's influence may have prevented, and what a spring of inspiration it has been to many active spirits, who have devoted so much time and sacrifice to its cause. Our path during 1910 has been oftentimes rough, and the way has been strewn with many obstacles, but it is pleasing to find that, although we have encountered many difficulties, we have come through without much injury and with an experience that will serve as a beacon light for the future. With all sincerity, permit me to appeal to everyone to throw jealous division and animosities away from us: they are the bane that afflicts our progress; to take each mate by the hand; to enter with him the bonds of true brotherhood. Then, under the protecting wing of the society, which for so long has held aloft the flag of unity and brotherhood, the cause of railway labour shall be righted and flourish."

We had drafted a Parliamentary Bill for a legal eight-hour day, and the Associated waited upon the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress suggesting amendments to it, and they suggested to them the advisability of seeing us and coming to an amicable understanding. One may suppose that to have waited upon us as the authors of the Bill would have been beneath their dignity, looking at the eyesight tests question. We then suggested in turn that a deputation from us to them should confer, and they met with us at the offices of the T.U.C., when Mr. Fox stated that it must be clearly understood that they had no mandate from their society for a legal eight-hour day for locomen, which made it appear as if they did not want to amend so much as kill. At this joint interview with the three bodies the preamble of the Bill and the provision of the other grades were agreed to, and in order to conciliate them and to smooth matters for the common good we made verbal alterations and put forward an amendment to form an additional sub-clause to section 1, which clause specified the grades which came under its provisions, and was as follows :—

" ' Subject to the proviso that in the case of trainmen they may be sent to their home station to sign off duty after being relieved from



J.H. Thomas.
1905-6



J.R. Bell.
1907-9



E. Charles.
1910.



A. Bellamy.
1911-17.



C.T. Crann.
1918-19.



W.L. Abraham.
1920-21.



J. Marchbank.
1922.

PRESIDENTS

charge of their engine or train on or before the expiration of eight hours from the time of signing on duty.'

"After further discussion, in order to do all that was possible in the case to secure an agreement, we accepted three points of amendment to the above sub-section, the first being that the word 'may' on second line be substituted by the word 'shall.' (2) after the word 'their' on second line the words 'intended destination, or' be inserted. (3) At the end add 'Such signing off to be counted not less than a full day's work.'

"On the second day of our Conference the mileage clause put forward by the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen was considered. All agreed that it was impossible to admit the amendment in the way it was drafted, and if recast the very natural question arose as to whether it was a matter which would pass as being in conformity with the title and preamble of the Bill, which all parties to the Conference had agreed to. The question was put by the chairman to the Associated representatives as to whether, if this mileage question was submitted to a Parliamentary authority, would they be prepared to go on with the Conference and help forward the Bill, and his answer was in the negative. They replied that they would not then have further negotiations on the measure. This attitude taken up by the other side rendered all our efforts abortive."

So once more the dog-in-the-manger policy was adopted by them, as if to say "We do not want it ourselves, and we will see, so far as we are concerned, that you do not." The printed report of the Conference is on record and contains seventy-six printed pages, the size of our E.C. minute pages.

Mr. Pilcher, who had held the office of Trustee for twenty-two and a-half years, died on May 12th, 1911. He succeeded J. Byrne, who had died in agony in the accident ward of the Wolverhampton Infirmary as the result of an accident. Byrne was the guard who was portrayed on the right-hand of the second emblem standing under the arch with a lamp. Pilcher had married a second time, and two of his three children died of diphtheria, the shock of which gave him a paralytic stroke. He had been a delegate to A.G.M.'s, and was E.C. man at the time Harford was appointed. An obituary notice was given of him in the "Railway Review" of May 19th, 1911, by a familiar pen. He appeared as a vigorous polemic just after his E.C. term. His forte was figures. He seemed to live on them. He wrote notes in our organ as "Gleaner," and also "Co-operative Notes," and it seemed the acme of tragedy that the one who was an outstanding advocate of co-operation should lose £400 in the failure of the Battersea Co-operative Society after its Jubilee. He also wrote the history of the same society during the time he was secretary. A collection was made for him on the recommendation of the E.C. He was conscientious to a fault, a stern stickler for rule, and in his capacity as Finance Committeeman would never bow to its transgression, which rendered it difficult at times to

give expression to the collective will, as in the case of the establishment of the Central Labour College, and having had legal opinion, that a trustee should refuse to do things not provided for by rule, and legal decisions in his favour on this point time after time, the difficulty had to wait till legal provision was made; but in this, as in other cases, patience, tact, and skill won. Mr. F. C. Fagg was elected in his stead by 30 votes, against 28 given to W. Foot, of West Brompton.

This year the amalgamation of unions by industries came sharply into view. Tom Mann had written upon it. The following resolution had been adopted the year before at the T.U.C. by 1,175,000 to 256,000, the plea in favour being that in cases of disputes we should act as a combined industry and not as a section. Mr. Chandler, of the Railway Clerks, seconded the proposal:—

“That, in the opinion of this Congress, the present system of sectional Trade Unionism is unable to successfully combat the encroachments of modern capitalism, and, while recognising the usefulness of sectional unionism in the past and present, the Congress realises that much greater achievements are possible, and the redemption of the working class would be hastened if all the existing unions were amalgamated by industries, with one Central Executive elected by the combined unions, and with power to act unitedly whenever there is a strike or lock-out in any industry, thus making the grievance of one the concern of all. The Congress therefore instructs its Parliamentary Committee to put themselves in communication with all the Trade Unions in Great Britain, and ascertain their views on the above question, also to promote a general scheme of amalgamation, and make a recommendation on the matter to the next Congress.”

The Executive Committee followed it up with these resolutions, which were carried unanimously:—

“Moved by Edwards and Law: ‘That, in reply to the circular of the Trades Union Congress re amalgamation of unions by industries, this Committee heartily endores the resolution of the T.U.C., and requests the Parliamentary Committee to submit their scheme for the proposed unification to this Committee as early as possible. We further inform the Parliamentary Committee that we are considering the question of a Transport Workers’ Union.’

“Moved by Fagg and Huckell: ‘That this Committee decide to call our members’ attention to the question of national federation of trades and amalgamation of unions by industries, and that branches send their opinion to this office. We also decide that a copy of the Trades Union Congress Parliamentary Committee circular on these questions be printed with the minutes of this sitting.’ ”

The E.C. went even further, and drew attention to the unfair methods of the Associated by their poaching upon the A.S.R.S. membership and by the granting of immediate Protection Benefit:—

“Arising out of our previous decision re amalgamation of unions, this Committee desire to call the attention of the Parliamentary

Committee of the Trades Union Congress to the fact that another society affiliated to the Congress, viz., the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, has in its rules a provision whereby they can take members of this society over and place them in instant Protection Benefit, and that organisers of the A.S.L.E. & F. are personally canvassing our members and making them this offer. Seeing the A.S.R.S. have in their ranks 20,976 locomen, this Committee is of opinion that serious notice should be taken by the Trades Union Congress of poaching of this description. If the Parliamentary Committee are unable to deal with this question satisfactorily, we desire the attention of the Trades Union Congress to be called to the matter."

The response of the branches was : Union by industry, 78 ; in favour of union by federation, 12 ; federation by trades, 183.

The Government had launched a proposal for National Health Insurance, the scheme to apply to all workers, except those specially exempted under its provisions, which provided invalidity payment and medical treatment in sickness and sanatoria treatment in tuberculosis cases. The position in the Bill regarding the position of Trade Unions was doubtful, and where not doubtful dangerous, and the proposals ate into old findings, that participation of sick funds was contingent upon continued membership in the union. Conferences were held and amendments tabled, some of which were carried. But ultimately there was embodied in the Bill, which was passed into an Act of Parliament, provisions which gave railway companies and other employers, as well as capitalistic insurance companies (whether of the " Friendly " type or otherwise) power to set up a society.

One of the most indefatigable of our members who mastered the Bill and Act from A to Z, who visited branches with propagandist aims, and wrote in the " Railway Review " under the *nom de plume* of " Sphere," was Willet Ball, Sub-Editor of that paper, and now Editor, and to him the members and the governing body were indebted for the extraordinary pains he took to enlighten them as to the provisions and the duty of making the union their contributing channel.

We established an " Approved Society " under the Act. Unfortunately many of our members—some of them the most prominent—for minor concessions in contributions, benefits, and pensions, succumbed to the blandishments of the companies, and did not see the value of " Trade Union over all."

The setting up of this involved a new sphere of work. Difficult as were the initial stages, it was rendered still more so by events which took place in the setting up, and which led to the breaking down of the health of the General Secretary, and that fine spirit of his received a shock that hastened his end, which temporarily carries us into the next year.

The rules of the society provided that casual labour employed at the office should be paid at the rate of 30s. per week, whilst the clerks received 35s., they having to pass tests in typing, shorthand, and

arithmetic. In order to give employment to our members who were out of work, Mr. Williams made inquiries of the London branches, and fifteen were employed to get out the books of membership of the Approved Section. They were paid as per rule, for a week of thirty-nine hours, overtime at time and a-half for the first five days after seven hours and after four hours on Saturday. The men appeared to appreciate the act of Mr. Williams. The work required prompt handling, and they worked overtime, their wages averaging £2 10s. per week. After the overtime had ceased he was asked by a deputation to give them 35s. a week. He promised to lay their case before the Management Committee, composed of Messrs. Bellamy, Law, Robinson, Henderson, Hooton, and Cramp, members of the Executive Committee of the union. The Committee agreed to meet all the men. Then one of them wrote at length to the "Daily Herald" and sent deputations to various London branches, at which some of the permanent staff attended, and who it was said, but which they denied, had decided to support the men in any action they took.

Mr. Williams made tests of time and work with regard to the cards. Eight men in one room completed 1,607, averaging 200 per man per day. In another room five men averaged 162 per man per day. A week later seven men did at the rate of ninety-six per day each man, compared with the 200 of the previous week. Another batch averaged 112 per day against 162 of the previous week. He asked two of his clerks to work fairly for an hour on these cards: One did seventy, the other seventy-five. Inquiry at other places showed the men did 350 per man per day against the above figures.

Mr. Williams then went to the T.U.C., and Mr. Thomas took charge. He asked the chief clerk when the cards then in hand would be completed, and was informed Saturday. The printers just then were working at high pressure and were unable to send further cards, and so the men were put off till the cards came to hand, and the matter was delegated to Mr. Thomas. Directly after a deputation waited upon him complaining of the manner in which they were dismissed, and contended there was work to do. The casuals then telephoned to the printers in the name of the society telling them that the cards must be there for certain on Monday. They called a meeting on the Monday morning and invited the members of the permanent staff to join them. As a result of the meeting they sent a deputation to Mr. Williams, who informed them he would lay the matter before the E.C. They thereupon picketed Unity House. Mr. Williams told the E.C. that this action was not only an attempt to take advantage of a difficult situation, but by the methods employed was calculated to disrupt the whole organisation. The E.C. invited all the men before them, put written questions to them, and they gave a reply. The E.C. again gave them audience. After a very lengthy report, Mr. Williams said:—

"I have confined myself to the general facts, which are indisputable. The staff engaged at this office are, without exception, treated on fair

and equitable terms. Their conditions of employment are such that will compare with any other employer in the country, either municipality, Government, or Trade Union. Any reasonable request is at all times conceded. They are, like myself, the servants of the members; our duty is a mutual one, to render all the service possible to improve the conditions of the railwaymen, increase the membership of the society, do nothing that would injure the position and prestige of the organisation in the eyes of the general public, and, above all, cause no friction amongst our members. The past two years has been a period when the whole resources of the society have been taxed to an extent unknown in its history. This has naturally taxed the staff as well as the officers, and I have recognised this in my general treatment of the staff in all matters, but their action in connection with the casual business has usurped all authority; in fact, I have been treated with the utmost contempt in the matter."

The following is the E.C. decision, carried unanimously:—

"Moved by Cramp and Henderson: 'That this Committee, having heard the reply of the members of the A.S.R.S. who have been casually employed at this office to the several charges brought against them, each of which is calculated to damage the prestige of the society, to hamper the working of the machinery of the society, and to divert the energies of this society from its fundamental purpose, viz., the advancement of the economic interests of its members by prosecuting war against the capitalist class, to providing employment for a few of its members, decides to expel under Rule 9, clause 14, all such of those members who do not by 5-30 p.m. of this date tender a written expression of regret for their action and a promise to discontinue the same in future.'"

Mr. Williams continued:—

"I communicated this resolution to each member of the temporary staff individually. Two replies were received and accepted. Mr. Dear sent the following letter on behalf of the remaining twelve:—

" '45, Suffolk Street, Forest Gate,

" 'September 11th, 1912.

" 'Mr. J. E. Williams, J.P., General Secretary.

" 'DEAR SIR,—The letter sent to the respective members of the casual staff has been considered by a meeting of the men affected, the absentees being Bros. Monk and Gordon. The following resolution has been unanimously carried:—

" 'That this meeting of the casual staff affected in the present dispute, having considered the resolution of the E.C. which has been submitted to the men concerned desire to say that under the circumstances they consider no apology is necessary, seeing that they have gone through all the possible constitutional methods as laid down by the E.C. of the A.S.R.S., seeing also that the time given has been so short for this reply, we still claim an opportunity of submitting our defence.

" 'Yours faithfully

" 'CHARLES DEAR,

" 'Secretary to Casual Staff Committee.' "

The E.C. dealt with the matter in the following resolutions :—

“ Moved by Billett and Cramp : ‘ This Committee, after considering the replies sent in by the temporary employés to our Resolution No. 64, deeply regrets these members have not availed themselves of the leniency extended to them. We, therefore, have no alternative but to give effect to that decision, and expel Messrs. J. Nicholson, Deptford; J. Joy, F. Howe, and W. E. Cripps, Neasden; E. Hobbs, West Brompton; H. Reigate, Purley; E. S. Gough, Hammersmith; C. Dear, Stratford; W. C. Ives, Shepherd’s Bush; D. Weir and C. W. Bussley, Rotherhithe; and D. Bunday, Tottenham. Further, we instruct the General Secretary to give effect to this resolution.’ ”

This was carried unanimously.

“ Moved by Cuthbertson and Law : ‘ That, in consequence of the situation which has arisen in connection with the casual employés in this office, this Committee decides to have Clerks Wigzell, Watson, Buckingham, Stevens, Humbles, Harlen, Kaiser, Cutler, Webster, and Barstow, of the permanent staff, before us with a view to ascertaining their connection or connivance with this matter.’ ”

This also was carried unanimously.

“ Moved by Robinson and Billett : ‘ That this E.C., having carefully considered the position of our General Office clerks in connection with the casual staff, and the attitude adopted of insubordination from time to time, hereby decide to stop their future advance in wages for six months; also that the President admonish Messrs. Watson, Buckingham, Kaiser, Cutler, Humbles, and Barstow as to their conduct, and that any further complaint in connection with their duty will be met by instant dismissal. The case of Clerk Stevens, he being at present on leave, to be dealt with at our next meeting.’ ”

“ First amendment by Henderson and Vennell : ‘ That this E.C., after full and impartial hearing of the General Office permanent staff as to their aiding and abetting the casual employés, per meetings, machinery, and resolutions, decide that such conduct demands our severest censure, and hereby say that Messrs. Watson, Humbles, Cutler, Kaiser, and Buckingham be brought into the room and admonished by the President, so that this shall act as a deterrent, as any further such conduct shall merit dismissal.’ ”

“ Second amendment by Cuthbertson and Burgneay : ‘ That this E.C., having heard the statements of certain members of the permanent staff regarding their attitude towards the irregular action of the casual staff, accepts their assurances that they do not associate themselves with the action complained of, but desire to point out to them that their actions certainly bear that construction, and warns them to be more careful in the future.’ ”

The first amendment was carried.

“ Moved by Hooton and Henderson : ‘ That this Committee, having carefully reviewed the position, and inquired into the conduct of certain

members of the permanent staff, deeply regret to find such an unsatisfactory state of things prevailing at the Head Office of the society, and having regard to the responsible and confidential nature of the duties devolving upon the clerical staff, we hereby direct the General Secretary to immediately suspend from duty any member of the staff wilfully disobeying the legitimate instructions of executive officers or in any way acting contrary to the interests of this organisation, and to report the matter to this Committee at once. Further, that a copy of this minute be conveyed to each member of the staff, with an intimation that the authority of the General Secretary must be upheld, and that this Committee is open to receive any appeal or representations made on their behalf.' "

Mr. J. R. Bell, who was one of the local Organisers who had passed the tests at that time and had been elected with the highest number of votes, was a candidate, among others, for the position of Organising Secretary, vacated by Mr. Thomas. In this, the E.C. considered he had not passed the test. The examinations were by numbers, which cleared it of all personal questions. The manuscript was referred to Mr. Dennis Hird, the Principal of the Central Labour College, and he gave Mr. Bell's essay as being of merit that ranked among the highest. Much controversy went on with regard to the matter. Mr. Bell's complaint, in the main, was, that having passed the first test, he should have been open to compete with others without an examination, and now that an election had taken place and he was placed with this stigma upon him, he could not in any fresh election have a fair advantage, otherwise he could have won. There was an abnormal difficulty with regard to the election, which resulted as follows:—

Bebbington	4,908
Brown	10,947
Charles	17,430
Edwards	3,188
Peacock	4,231
Spoilt papers	1,411

The next vote resulted in Charles obtaining 18,501 votes, which gave him a majority of 702 over Brown. Cardiff No. 2 Branch had sent in 257 votes without the branch stamp, and these were ruled out. There had been a strike during the process, and ten branches had sent in their papers after the specified date, which, when they had been excluded, gave a Brown a majority of 132, because the excluded votes for Brown were 119 and for Charles 953, so it was referred to the A.G.M., which decided that another vote be taken. The vote was taken and Brown was elected.

Irritation in the Labour world had been growing. Railwaymen were incensed at "conciliation" methods. Cloud upon cloud gathered; the feeling became tense, and it seemed as if at any moment there might be a labour struggle on railways. The Coronation of George V. had only just taken place when trouble arose in the shipping world. There had been rumours of an international strike, but this was confined to

Great Britain and two other countries. The dockers struck work in sympathy with the seamen, and it was most acute at Liverpool, Manchester, and Hull. It did not affect railwaymen until some of the goods men at Manchester struck on July 3rd. Mr. Williams went down and was present during the negotiations. The difficulties in connection with the railway sections were augmented in consequence of the various unions and grades affected and with the numerous programmes submitted to the various companies concerned after the strike had commenced. After it had been in progress a few days Mr. Askwith, of the Board of Trade, was requested to act as arbitrator, which he did, and the agreement arrived at and signed was: "Railwaymen return to work on Monday in the same position as previous to the strike, and the grievances to be submitted to the Conciliation Boards in a constitutional manner; the companies to take no legal action against the men for breach of contract."

During the course of the seamen's strike the L. & Y. officials tried to get our men to take the place of the strikers, but they refused, and Tom Mann thanked them for assistance rendered in obtaining a victory for the seamen and dockers. Five companies became concerned in the dispute, and about 3,000 railwaymen were out.

All over the country there were strikes. The strike had spread from the seamen to the dockers, and the dockers to the carters, in Manchester. They spread rapidly, and each won independent triumphs. The seamen won, but would not go back to work till the dockers were propitiated, and the carmen would not go back till all the individual trades were satisfied. The others striking for sympathy with the seamen, the seamen kept out in sympathy till all were satisfied.

The new Trade Disputes Act was found useful, and all was done with order and method, and all parties spoke of the good humour of the proceedings.

So in London the dockers, having won for their section, came out in sympathy with the lightermen, stevedores, and carmen. Liverpool, however, was the storm centre. The railwaymen there struck in sympathy with the dockers, and when the dockers had obtained satisfaction they refused to return till the railwaymen's claims were admitted. The shipowners butted in with a sympathetic lock-out, which in turn was met by all the transport workers declaring a strike. The military were called out, and the police were reinforced from places far and near and were under military control. They were drafted wherever the employers requested, and the civil authorities were overridden both at Manchester and Liverpool. At Manchester it was noticeable that thirty hours after the strike was settled a body of soldiers was despatched to Manchester by the military commander, General Burney. He had not consulted the Lord Mayor, and the soldiers' advent was resented. General Burney said he had sent them because the companies had asked for them. (This is going forward a bit.)

Liverpool being the storm centre, the Executives of the four railway unions met at Liverpool, and a joint policy was agreed upon. They

decided that unless the companies agreed upon the terms formulated, with twenty-four hours to negotiate for a basis of agreement, a national strike would be declared. They passed three lengthy resolutions, the first of which was the resolution which had been passed in September of the previous year complaining of the methods the companies adopted and the vexatious proceedings in connection with the working of the conciliation and arbitration schemes agreed to in 1907. The second resolution was: "That this joint meeting of the Executives of the A.S.R.S., the A.S.L.E. & F., G.R.W.U., and the Pointsmen's Society, summoned to consider the critical situation that has arisen in consequence of the strike of railway workers in Liverpool and other centres, and also the universal demand for instructions to cease work, hereby unanimously agree to offer to the railway companies twenty-four hours to decide whether they are prepared to immediately meet the representatives of these societies to negotiate a basis of settlement of the matters in dispute affecting the various grades. In the event of the offer being refused, there will be no alternative but to respond to the demands now being made for a national railway stoppage."

The third was: "We, the Executive Committees of the railwaymen's unions, having been specially summoned to Liverpool to consider the grave position in which the railwaymen all over the country find themselves in consequence of the present disputes, regret to learn on reliable authority that a serious riot took place here on Sunday, precipitated by the indiscriminate and merciless action of the police. We desire to point out to all concerned that such brutal work is condemned by the workers all over the country, that the present unrest is not confined to one point where police and military men can be drafted to bludgeon and shoot innocent people, but permeates the whole of the Labour forces of Great Britain; and that, further, we shall only use our best endeavours to maintain order in the absence of unnecessary brutality. We trust that it may not be necessary to call our National and International Congresses to consider any such brutal conduct and prevent wholesale cold-blooded murder in the future."

The venue then shifted from Liverpool to London, and the Executives arrived there on the Wednesday, when, after a preliminary meeting at Unity House, they went to meet Sydney Buxton, the President of the Board of Trade. The Government had previously met Lord Claud Hamilton, Viscount Churchill, Sir James Inglis, Mr. H. Holmes, Sir Frederick Banbury, the chairmen of some of the companies, with their managers and secretaries. Before that the managers held a preliminary conference at their headquarters in Parliament Street, and so did what we had done, each of them considering their own point of view. Just before noon about thirty of them met at the Board of Trade, and after they had left the following statement was issued to the Press:—

"The Government having assured the railway companies that they will give ample protection to enable them to carry on their services,

the railway companies are prepared, even in the event of a general railway strike, to give an effective, if restricted, service."

This statement shows that the Government was on the side of the companies.

The Executives had been wired to meet the Board of Trade on the Thursday. Mr. Asquith was then Prime Minister, and a Cabinet Meeting was held at the same time the Executives were meeting at the Board of Trade, and the decisions arrived at by the men's leaders were conveyed to him. The following questions and answers were put and given :—

" Questions 1 and 2. What were the actual causes on which the Executives had based their action in issuing their manifesto? and What were the actual grievances in connection with the Conciliation Boards Agreement in 1907?—The failure of the railway companies to behave in the spirit and letter of the Conciliation Board Agreement of 1907, and the utter impossibility of the men's representatives to redress the many grievances of which the men complained.

" 3. Were those grievances sufficiently grave to justify the action which the Executives had taken?—Yes.

" 4. Could those grievances not be remedied in a less drastic way?—Yes. By the suggestion offered by the Committee to the railway companies requesting them to meet authorised representatives of the men.

" 5. Could those grievances be remedied in the way proposed by the men, of a general railway strike?—Yes. In our opinion it is the only course. We have also considered the possibility of further questions being asked, and we have unanimously come to the conclusion that the only way that will now be an effective method of peace is that the companies consent to meet us."

This was " recognition," which the companies had sworn—from Lord Claud downwards, he having started the ball rolling in that direction—that never under any conditions would they meet with outsiders, but only with the men in their employ. Subsequently Mr. Asquith and the President of the Board of Trade met the Executives and made the following offer :—

" I have considered carefully, in consultation with the President of the Board of Trade and my colleagues in the Cabinet, the replies given by Mr. Bellamy on your behalf to the five questions submitted by Mr. Buxton to you. Your answer to the first and second questions is that the ground of your action is the failure of the railway companies to behave in the spirit and letter of the Conciliation Board Agreement of 1907, and the utter impossibility of the men's representatives to redress the many grievances of which the men complain. Your answer to all the remaining questions has been based upon and assumed the correctness of statements, and it is of the first and most essential importance to establish or disprove by impartial investigation the soundness of your statements. For this purpose his Majesty's Government are prepared to immediately appoint a Royal Commission to

investigate the working of the Conciliation Agreement and to report what amendments, if any, are desirable in the scheme, with a view to promote a satisfactory settlement of the grievances. I hope to announce without delay the names of the Commissioners, who will meet at the earliest possible moment. I may further add that I confidently hope we may rely on your assistance in giving the Commission the fullest possible help and information."

The deputation rejected it. In workmen's parlance, "they had had some," and this was the old dodge of evasion and wearing down the spirit of determination that then prevailed. If they could only tide the dispute over a little period they, no doubt, felt sure it would prevent a strike, and have a battle over words instead of a strike. To make quite sure what their intentions were they formulated the following resolution:—

"That we consider the statements made on behalf of his Majesty's Government an unwarrantable threat against the railway workers, whom for years have made repeated applications to the Board of Trade—also to Parliament—to consider the advisability of amending the Conciliation Boards scheme of 1907 with a view to so adjusting the machinery that the grievances of the men may be remedied; and the further failure of the Board of Trade to amend their own scheme is, in our opinion, the primary cause of the present unrest, which is not limited to any one company or grade, but common to all. We, therefore, reiterate our claim that the workers of the railway companies are entitled to the same treatment from their employers as workmen employed by other employers of labour, and as this joint meeting has already urged the employers to meet us with a view to a discussion of the whole position, which is agreed to by them, it should, in our opinion, settle the matter, and we refuse to accept the responsibility which the Government has attempted to throw upon us. Further, we respectfully, but firmly, ask his Majesty's Government whether the responsibility of the railway companies to the nation is in any less degree than that of any other employers of labour; and with a full sense of the grave step we are taking, we feel satisfied that our duty to those we represent compels us to refuse the offer of his Majesty's Government, and reluctantly revert to the decision of Tuesday last."

That stern answer meant war. Immediately nearly 2,000 telegrams were sent out to the railwaymen: "Your liberty is at stake. All railwaymen must strike at once. The loyalty of each means victory for all.—(Signed) Williams, Fox, Lowth, Chorlton."

Asquith was a very determined man, and he had just shown that determination with reference to the Diehards in the Lords, some of whom were prepared "to damn the consequences" with regard to the Budget proposals, and he took steps to defeat them, and they gave way. He was equally determined here, and it is said, when the decision was conveyed to him, that with blanched cheeks he had said all the resources of the Government, civil and military, would

be used to see that the food of the nation was not interfered with. There were denials of this, but it is vouched for in substance by those who saw and listened to him when the decision was conveyed to him. Under the signatures of the four secretaries this manifesto was issued:—

“**FELLOW WORKERS**,—Nearly four years ago an agreement was entered into between the Board of Trade, the representatives of the railway companies, and your organisation, which provided machinery for the purpose of dealing with disputes regarding rates of wages and hours of labour. Your organisations made every effort loyally to carry out both the spirit and the letter of the agreement they had entered into on your behalf. From the commencement the companies showed they were not prepared to carry out their share of the bargain by delaying in every way the formation of the Boards, so much so that in the case of one company Boards were not formed till April, 1909. After the Boards were formed every obstacle the ingenuity of the companies could suggest were placed in the way of the men’s claims being considered and redressed. After considerable delay, when agreements had been arrived at, the companies applied their own interpretations thereto, the signatories on behalf of the men being refused any voice in this all-important matter. Whether in revenge for having to meet the men or not we do not know, but, coincident with the settlement, a policy of harassing and driving the men was instituted, until to-day the railwaymen are worse than slaves. All these circumstances, which are well known to railwaymen and can be amplified from their practical experience, caused outbreaks at various centres. Even then, had the companies met the representatives of the men the present position would have been saved. The companies arrogantly refused, and by so doing denied the railway workers of this country what has been conceded to every other class of worker. As the men throughout the United Kingdom have shown their unchangeable determination not to tolerate this state of affairs any longer, we call upon every railwayman to join his fellows and so strike a united blow for deliverance from petty tyranny, and also help to obtain higher wages, shorter hours, and a more humane life for all.

“ On behalf of the joint Executive Committees,

“ J. E. WILLIAMS, General Secretary, A.S.R.S.

A. FOX, General Secretary, A.S.L.E. & F.

T. LOWTH, General Secretary, G.R.W.U.

S. CHORLTON, General Secretary, U.P. & S.S.

“ London, August 17th, 1911.”

The tocsin of war sounded. This was our first national strike. We had had county and sectional strikes, marked both by success and failure. In Wales success, when cessation was complete and victory equally so, and afterwards failure, and costly at that. On the Midland sectional failures; on the North-Eastern failures and successes. In

Ireland, successes and many failures. But this was national ; and how went the fight, and did we snatch the spoils of victory? The " Railway Review " sounded its notes and issued special editions during the fight. It said :—

" The momentous hour has come. Unless the railway companies are prepared to concede to their employes the elementary but important right of being represented by their unions a general railway strike will take place. Railwaymen are determined to be helots no longer. Their long years of bondage must be brought to an end. The Conciliation Boards have broken down. Their existence in their present form can no longer be tolerated. They have become instruments of oppression and caricatures of justice and fair play. They must be mended or ended. Men will be free—even railwaymen. They will not consent to be outcasts any longer. What they want is justice and fair play, the same opportunities for effective combination as others, the same open road to negotiate, the same right to select their own spokesmen, the same chance to have their wages and hours settled by agreement between their chosen Trade Union as is enjoyed by other workmen. They are determined to be satisfied with nothing less. A forced agreement is no bond. A compulsory Conciliation Board, where all the advantages are on the side of the companies and all the disadvantages on the side of the men, is not good enough for free men. The joint Executives have spoken. The present occasion sees railwaymen united. It is for the men to respond. ' Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow.' Let them settle the job on this occasion once for all. No half-hearted rallies; no sectional or merely local stoppages will do. There must be one great united effort, and then the fight will be won. The word has gone forth. Let us end the present intolerable position for ever."

There was the right ring in every sentence and word of this. Even the word which grated on the nerves of men who sought redemption—" servant"—had gone. It is an appeal to men for manhood. Oneness was asked for. Nothing like it had appeared before. The men responded, the fight began, and soon there was ceased traffic, and where it had not ceased it was disorganised. All-gradism was forgotten; all sectional jealousies were in abeyance. The men acted, and the police and soldiers took their places, provocatively displayed. Parliamentary debates took place, the Labour Parties foregathered, and for a short time the signs looked ominous of civil war, because of the Government's deeds, and especially those of Churchill. Men were bludgeoned and killed. The Riot Act was read at Llanelly, and there were disturbances at other places, and threats of a still wider display of the strike policy. The Government, it was quite plain, were not so desirous of mediation as repression. That seemed to be their aim. The soldiers were placed in stations, lines were patrolled. They may have sought peace whilst they made war, but the men knew only their side of the case from that of the Government approach. Negotiations were opened, and because the companies would not recognise

the leaders matters went on in the peace-making line with parties kept apart, the Government acting as threatening messengers between; and never the twain did meet. Had not that hateful word "recognition" been banned, a quick settlement might have been; indeed, no strike would have taken place. But there was loyal action taking place, in the main. Whether the prolongation of the strike would have made it more effective it is impossible to say, but the signs pointed that way.

A large gathering had been arranged for at Hyde Park, and it was held. The one outstanding fact of the speeches was, that for the first time in the history of railway Trade Unionism all the Executives had acted together. That was worth something, whatever might be said of the settlement. The President, Mr. Bellamy, said: "For the first time in history the four railway Trade Unions had promoted a united front. In the midst of a national crisis each organisation, sinking petty differences and personal jealousies, had joined with others in a common cause," and outlining the causes of the strike and the outcome of it said: "The fight had been worth fighting, and the result was the winning of a magnificent victory for the railwaymen." Mr. Williams remarked: "This is a period for congratulation for all of us on the accomplishment of last night in obtaining the recognition of our organisation," and he stated that it had been one of the most pleasant experiences of his thirty years' connection with railway organisation.

Mr. Thomas said: "They had achieved during the past week the greatest victory ever achieved in the industrial world. They had compelled the high hand of autocracy to be brought down." He alone gave in his speech the genesis and history of the strike.

Mr. Lowth said they had secured recognition, and he hoped the outcome of the Commission would be a charter such as had been enjoyed by those who had obtained recognition.

Mr. Fox's speech, as all of them, was on the same theme. The terms of the settlement were:—

"1. The strike to be terminated forthwith and the men's leaders to use their best endeavours to induce the men to return to work at once.

"2. All the men involved in the present dispute, either by strike or lock-out, including casuals, who present themselves for work within a reasonable time to be reinstated by the companies at the earliest practical moment, and no one to be subject to proceedings for breach of contract or otherwise penalised.

"3. The Conciliation Board to be convened for the purpose of settling forthwith the questions at present in dispute, so far as they are within the scope of the Boards, provided notice of such questions be given not later than fourteen days from the date of the agreement. If the Sectional Boards fail to arrive at a settlement the Central Board to act at once (any decision to be retrospective as from the date of this agreement). It is agreed for the purpose of this and the following clause 'rates of wages' includes remuneration whether by time or piecework.

“ 4. Steps be taken forthwith to effect a settlement of the questions now in dispute between the companies and classes of their employés not included in the Conciliation Scheme of 1907, by means of conferences between representatives of the companies and representatives of their employés who are themselves employed by the same company, and failing agreement by arbitration to be arranged mutually or by the Board of Trade. The above to be a temporary arrangement pending the report of the Commission as to the best means of settling disputes.

“ 5. Both parties to give every assistance to the Special Commission of Inquiry, the immediate appointment of which the Government have announced.

“ 6. Any question which may arise as to the interpretation of this agreement to be referred to the Board of Trade.”

It was signed on behalf of the men by their leaders, on behalf of the companies by G. H. Cloughton and W. Guy Granet, and on behalf of the Board of Trade by D. Lloyd George, Sydney Buxton, R. Llewellyn Smith, and G. R. Askwith, the latter, be it said, the best mediator and arbitrator in disputes the whole world ever had.

Mr. Cloughton stated that upon certain representations of the Government Sir Guy Granet and himself had authority from the companies to meet the representatives under the special circumstances and with a view to discussing the suggested terms of agreement.

The terms had been discussed and agreed.

Sir Guy Granet and Mr. Cloughton further stated that the recommendations of the Royal Commission would be loyally accepted by the railway companies, even though they be adverse to the contention of the company on any question of representation, and should such a settlement be effected any trace of ill-will which may have arisen during the strike will certainly be effaced.

As explanatory of the terms, it was stated that clause 1 was not accepted until the other clauses had been agreed.

The leaders then issued the following manifesto :—

“ After a brief but magnificent struggle a settlement has been arrived at between the representatives of the railway workers and the railway companies sitting in joint conference, and it has been decided to ask you to accept this settlement and to return to work at once. It is necessary to point out that the present dispute originated in Liverpool and district, where nearly 10,000 railway workers came out on strike for better conditions and were immediately dismissed from the service of the companies. In order that these men should have their positions secured other men came out at Manchester, Stockport, Sheffield, and other places, and there was a general demand for a national stoppage. The Executives of the four railway organisations met at Liverpool and determined to give the companies twenty-four hours' notice that unless a settlement of the matters in dispute was arrived at between them and the whole organisations concerned the whole of the men on the

railways would be called out. When this statement was made public the Government at once sent for the managers and representatives of the companies, and also the four associations of the men's societies to meet them.

“ At first there was no response to the overtures of the Government and the President of the Board of Trade, and they then wired for the whole of the members of the joint Executives to come to London. Without going into details, it is only necessary to state here that the efforts to bring the parties together proved abortive, and a national strike was declared. So magnificently did the men respond to the call that within forty-eight hours the representatives of the Railway Companies' Association met the representatives of the men's societies face to face to negotiate a settlement. That settlement secures that all the men who have been dismissed or who had come out on strike should return to their work with full and complete unanimity, and thus the immediate and first object of the strike was secured, viz.: No man who responded to the call of his leaders should suffer, and those who struck work should not only return to their former positions, but we have an absolute guarantee that no malice will be shown by the companies toward men, and we have also secured the very definite pledge that all the long-standing grievances of the men shall be immediately considered, and in a manner foreign to our past experience.

“ An urgency Commission is to be immediately set up which will consider the whole question of settling disputes between the companies and our men, adjusting conditions of service, the working of Conciliation Boards, and the question of representation. It is important to remember that the railway companies have agreed in writing to accept the findings of that body, even if it demands 'recognition' of the unions. We have no hesitation in saying that, in addition to having won recognition in negotiating the present dispute, our evidence before the Commission will be such that justifies us in saying before many weeks are over railway workers will have won a charter long enjoyed by every other class of the community.

“ We would, therefore, urge you to loyally accept the agreement and demonstrate your confidence in the Executives and representatives of the four societies, who by working together have not only shown their power and taught our opponents a lesson, but by the loyalty which has been displayed has swept away the petty tyranny that has for years been the cause of so much unrest. In cases where we are bound by the Conciliation Agreement of 1907, the grievances of the men in respect of remuneration, etc., are to be immediately considered by representatives of the men and the railway companies, it being understood that the men may select as their representatives any of their fellow employés, irrespective of the grade to which they belong and the place where they may be meeting.

“ This splendid success has only been accomplished by the justice of our cause, and the perfect adhesion and unanimity of purpose between the four Executives conducting the campaign and the loyalty and courage of the rank and file of our organisations. It must be clearly understood that the settlement is contingent upon the promises of his Majesty's Government and the representatives of the Railway Association being faithfully adhered to. Every assistance will be given to the Government and the railway companies to establish with us a lasting peace in the railway service, providing they do their part. Prudence demands that we shall still be ready to take up the battle again should occasion require.

“ In the dispute, we have to thank the Labour Party, especially Messrs. Ramsay MacDonald, A. Henderson, and G. H. Roberts, for the splendid assistance rendered both in Parliament and during the negotiations which have been proceeding. The settlement was not arrived at until a statement had been made by the Board of Trade that the lock-out at Liverpool would be withdrawn immediately the railway dispute was settled.

“ We urge every non-unionist to immediately join one or other of the organisations concerned and do their part in assisting us to further improve the conditions of the railway worker and enable him to live a more humane and satisfactory existence.

“ J. E. WILLIAMS, General Secretary, A.S.R.S.

A. FOX, General Secretary, A.S.L.E. & F.

T. LOWTH, General Secretary, G.R.W.U.

S. CHORLTON, General Secretary, U.P.S.S.”

There were bound to be little hitches as to the agreement, but these were taken up and settled successfully.

Consider it, as it was for the moment, as a drawn battle; what of the future? We have forty years of history to look back upon, and recognition has been a feature of railway life since. So that this one gain stands to the credit of the strike, apart from the Liverpool settlement. What that meant is seen in the next decade, when the ordinary usages of national life were taken up by their roots in almost a world-wide war. Both the Government and the railway companies had, in the main, a very bad Press. We had an advantage on our side of the tactless blunders of the descendant of Marlborough; nor does Mr. Asquith shine here. The outstanding personalities on the other side were D. Lloyd George and Sir Guy Granet. Whatever may be said of Lloyd George, diplomacy with him is a shining quality.

There was yet another achievement, which drew the bonds of union tighter: Three railway organisations passed into one name—the “ National Union of Railwaymen.” It is never safe to prophesy, but it is most likely that complete oneness will come after some deepseated trouble, and the folly of isolation receive further practical demonstration.

The matter was afterwards discussed in the House of Commons, and the follies of the Government debated, and objection was taken to Mr. Beale being a member of the Commission because of his connection with the Midland Company. In the debates Ramsay MacDonald showed his statesmanship. With courtesy, candour, and wide intelligence he went to the root causes of things; he took the long view and marshalled his arguments with intellectual skill.

The Commissioners were: The Right Hon. Sir David Harrel, C. G. Beale, John Burnett, of the Board of Trade, T. R. Ellis, A. Anderson, M.P., J. J. Wills (Secretary). J. E. Williams, General Secretary, A.S.R.S., in his evidence, went into the foundation and history, which included the delays, the interpretations of findings, the cost of arbitration proceedings. The cost of eleven cases of arbitration for the undermentioned cases was:—

	£	s.	d.
London and North-Western	636	15	8
Great Northern of Ireland	831	15	5
North Stafford.....	150	9	10
Great Northern and City	80	10	10
North British	1,447	10	3
Caledonian	1,204	3	3
Midland	1,806	11	7
North-Eastern	1,635	0	11
Great Western.....	1,636	4	8
Great Eastern	1,259	19	9
Great Northern	1,519	0	7

He estimated that in round figures the conciliation machinery cost £30,000. With regard to arbitration, he showed the companies claimed the exclusive right to interpret awards.

Mr. Fox gave evidence. Mr. Lowth thought the Boards should be abolished. Mr. J. T. White thought the scheme was unfair and cumbersome, and had not given the men a fair chance, and he approved of one Board for all railways. Mr. J. Cuthbertson showed the delay of forming Boards, cost, and administration and interpretation difficulties, and he was disappointed in their working.

Mr. Thomas contended that the scheme failed entirely to remove the grievances of which the men complained. It was instituted under pressure and hastily considered. He also dealt with the delays and the suspicions of the men as to whether it was of any advantage to them at all, and showed how the companies, even where they kept to the letter of the scheme, failed in using the spirit of it, how the companies acted—citing the Great Western—and put in what the manager of the Great Western had said to the deputation: “We wish to preserve a feeling of good fellowship, but the time has come when we must put a stop to the dissatisfaction and agitation. Where we find men going about the line creating dissatisfaction, I shall have only one duty, a painful duty, and that is, to ask them to resign.”

The following letter was received from Mr. Churchward, the loco. superintendent of the Great Western :—

“ Your letter of the 18th to the general manager has been handed to me. In reply, I have to say that if you and those whom you represent are not satisfied with the conditions in my department I shall be pleased to receive your notice to leave the service of the G. W. R. I have advised my directors not to receive any deputation to discuss the so-called National Programme.”

Mr. Thomas said he had to say the Boards were a failure, and regretted saying it because he was in favour of the principle of conciliation, and went on to argue for what we call “ recognition.” The companies would not find them such a wicked body as to aggravate a difficulty instead of relieving it.

J. Bothney gave an instance where it was two years before a settlement was arrived at owing to delay in setting up the machinery and other causes. Even then the hours were changed and nullified the effect of the award.

E. Charles, out of his long experience of such cases, showed the causes of discontent, and he asked for the same treatment of the men as the company claimed, and that given a fair tribunal and a fair working of the decisions they would carry out their part of observance.

A. Bellamy, the President of the A.S.R.S., showed instance after instance of how the ropes were rigged against the men, and when a decision was made the company would set up a new grade at a lower minimum wage than existed previously. How the arbitrator gave an award of 2s. 6d., and the company saying the men had been having 2s. more than they should, and only gave 6d. In another case, where the shunters were awarded eight hours, the Midland took over the place, and the award became abortive. He gave it that the strike was the result of the inefficient working of the Boards.

F. C. Fagg at once showed the working, when, as in his coming to give evidence, the men wanted him to come, but the company had thrown impediments in his way, were victimising men who took part in the dispute, reducing them in grade, and removing them to other stations, and he tabulated instances.

And so witness after witness went through the long, dreary process, making a damning indictment against the methods employed by the companies, which their own gloss could not hide. The non-union element provided the sittings with the amusement that was needed to save it from boredom.

A. Braitwaite, a Midland signalman, candidly admitted that he represented nobody but himself, and F. Smith, the forlorn one from the Great Eastern, told the Commission that signalmen on the Great Eastern did not want recognition by the directors. Trade Unionism took away manhood, bound them rigidly down, and he objected to be bowed down. He objected to the A.S.R.S. and preferred individual action. These witnesses were not to be compared with the witnesses of the Select Committee of years before, because they had been active Trade Unionists up to that time, and they had learned something in

the years of their membership. But these had a difficulty of presenting even a shadow of a case, though most men would prefer the non-intelligent to a traitor.

One surprise, however, was sprung upon our leaders. Mr. Walker, the assistant manager of the L. & N.W., said that in 1907 the scheme of Boards was accepted by them as an alternative to recognition, the company agreeing to waive the right to regulate hours of duty and rates of pay on the understanding that recognition should be dropped during the time of the operation of the scheme, which, if it was so, shows that a bargain was made between the Government of that time and the companies, to which the men were not parties.

The one witness on the companies' side who was outspoken was Lord Claud Hamilton. His most active opponents always gave him the merit of candour, and the merit consists in knowing just where your opponent is; and he left no doubt about the position he took up. He spoke not only for the company, but for the majority of men in their employ, who were not members of the A.S.R.S., and had no wish to be, and mentioned a profit-sharing scheme that been considered but had to be abandoned owing to the difficulties of carrying it out. In ten years they had increased the wages of their staff by £52,953. "Down to the present time the only serious trouble which I and my predecessor had on the G. E. has always been due to the action of the active members of the A.S.R.S." But for these, they would have been a happy family, and without the perpetual troubles which arose. The men he complained about were those who received from 7s. 6d. to 10s. a piece for speeches made, and who never left him alone. They were the men who caused all the unrest and whose action was repudiated by the other men. But his special objection was to the cartoons concerning himself, one of which represented him as holding a whip, which was like a Russian knout, preparing to belabour one of his men, with a starving woman in the corner with a child on her knee. The offence was the greater because the Editor was a Member of Parliament and, when he thought fit, a preacher of the Gospel; and he advised him to choose as his next subject for his religious theme the Ninth Commandment. "Peaceful picketing was a misnomer." Trade was being driven out of the country by Trade Unionists, but in cross-examination by Mr. A. Henderson, Lord Claud admitted that tariffs had also something to do with it. He said the E.C. of the A.S.R.S. was dominated by Socialists, and when asked how that was, as the others, he had said, were against them, that they obtained the positions, and the answer was "brains and cunning." He was against recognition in any form whatever.

The comment upon that is that recognition is complete on the G. E., and at no time from 1880 has the G. E. been more peaceful. Lest it should go down to history that his charge of price-paid speeches was true, the writer would point out, if he may become a fool in glorying, he did more work and made more speeches on the G. E. for a decade and a-half at least than any other man, and never a penny

for speech or fares was ever paid him, except when he visited such places as Ipswich and Norwich, when the fare was paid, and no time was lost, he coming back by the mail and taking morning duty. But his lordship was never so bad as he made himself appear to be. He is one of the most kindly of men, and with that indwelling has the gift of humour, which ought to have saved him from the extravagant speeches he made from time to time. He could not brook outside interference. He wanted to do all the good he could in his own way, but it must be his way and none other. He was the judge of what was good, and it was anathema for any one to stand between the wind and his nobility. It may be added that our skilful cartoonist improved the suggestion of Lord Claud about brains by humorously suggesting a way out of the difficulty, in which his lordship was looking approvingly on whilst a professor is trepanning a youth and putting in brains with a spoon, whilst on the right is the "Finished Article" with a sandwich-board inscribed "Guaranteed to have no opinions whatever."*

The report of the Commission was presented in October, 1911. The new procedure set out in detail the channels of communication, and made it a necessity for 25 per cent. of the men to sign a petition against the old 10 per cent. The old one allowed two months for it to operate; they reduced it to twenty-eight days. In the case of absence of agreement the matters in dispute to be referred to the Sectional Conciliation Board. They added to the hours and wages question that of conditions of service, which included the trip system, mileage clauses, bonuses, and other things, did away with the Central Board and made the Sectional Board decision binding. The directors could not decline to accept any increased expenditure agreed to by the companies' representatives, nor could the men decline to accept the findings of their representatives. Sectional Boards, if they could not agree, had power to call in an outside chairman, he, where practicable, to be the same for all the Boards on any company; his decision to be final and operate for two years. If arbitration ensued, he to be the arbitrator, and to be appealed to in disputed cases of interpretation, and could be called in to decide if a special meeting was necessary and what should go on the agenda. The chairman's expenses to be borne by the Government, and not, as heretofore, a joint charge. The A.S.R.S. witnesses were all in favour of one Board only for each company. The Associated favoured the retention of the Sectional Boards and the abolition of the Central Board, as also did the companies.

On the question of "recognition," it is well to give the findings in full. After saying that whatever the companies may have understood in the old agreement, they had no evidence that the men understood it to be an essential condition that recognition should not be raised during the time of operation of the agreement.

"The representatives of the men ask for recognition; the companies object to it in any shape. The exact meaning of the term as it would be applied in practice is not quite clearly conveyed by either of the

* "Railway Review," September 29th, 1911.

parties. The unions do not all express the same views. Some desire the presence of a Trade Union official to help the men in advocating their case before the officers of the company or before the directors; others think that their purpose would be served by the admission of the union official to help the men before the Conciliation Boards. The existing practice is that Trade Union officials are admitted to plead before the arbitrator. The apprehensions of the companies are that recognition, as they interpret it, would seriously affect discipline and interfere with the management if men in approaching their officers or directors on any subject of grievance or complaint had the right to bring a Trade Union official with them. We think that with their great responsibilities the companies cannot and should not be expected to permit any intervention between them and their men on the subject of discipline and management. The Trade Unions press strongly for recognition as representatives of the men. No doubt in some matters and on some occasions friendly relations between companies and representatives of unions have been both convenient and useful. The witness who appeared before us on behalf of the G. W. gave an illustration of the valuable results which attended his collaboration with the Trade Union official who had conducted the case of the men before the arbitrator. In this instance many vexed points on the interpretation were settled quite satisfactorily, and in our opinion a more general adoption of this method of negotiation would be helpful to both parties. In our amended scheme we have provided that the members of each Board shall be at liberty to select a secretary from any source they may think proper. We mention this in connection with the subject of recognition, as it may be regarded as pertaining to it."

The findings were not all that was wanted—was it ever so?—but they were an improvement upon what had been.

The national strike was only just settled and the noise of it was still in the air when a dispute arose in Ireland. On Friday, September 15th, some loads of timber were brought into Kingsbridge Goods Station from the firm of Henry Kelly and Company, of Thames Street, Dublin, the employés of which firm were out on strike, and the men who drove the lorries were under police protection. Two checkers named Kelly and McCann, when requested to check the timber, refused on the ground that they were handling blackleg traffic, and were suspended at once for their refusal. A short consultation was held with the rest of the men in the stores, and a decision was made to strike in a body. An interview with Mr. Carroll, the goods agent, failed to settle the difference, so a deputation met Mr. Neale, the goods manager, who informed the men that unless they went back and carried out the instructions no consideration would be given. They informed the management that they declined to go back to work so long as the company insisted upon them handling the strike traffic, and the men were allowed to resume their former occupation undisturbed for the time being. The manager requested Mr. O'Meara to put the conditions in writing as to whether or not they had the sanction of the

society, so that he could lay the matter before the board of directors, who were meeting on the following day. Then the Free Labour Association came upon the scene and were inviting applicants for the positions of guards, shunters, and checkers.

On the 19th the Executive went to Ireland and met at No. 7 Lower Abbey Street, Dublin, and took the matter in hand, as the trouble was spreading. They had instructed Mr. Williams to write to the managers of the Irish railways to talk the matter over and try to effect a settlement. They then renewed the offer, but the management made no sign, and the men were being dismissed or penalised for refusing to handle the traffic in dispute. So, in the absence of a reply, they then threatened to withdraw all railway labour in Ireland, and communicated the essence of the dispute to the Press. It was intimated to them that the Under-Secretary for Ireland wished to see Messrs. Williams, Bellamy, Rimmer, and Larkin, of the Irish Transport Workers, but nothing of any value resulted, and it looked like a general strike. So a plan of campaign was mapped out, and the officers who had been called from England to assist were located, and took charge of matters in specified places. Branches were then wired to be ready when they gave the signal. Attempt after attempt was made, through Sir James Dougherty and other means, but one manager was ill and the others made no sign, so by Thursday they had issued the following telegram: "Executive Committee call upon all men on the G.N.I., G.S. & W., Midland, N. Counties, Belfast and County Down, Dunkirk, Newry, and Greenore to cease work at once and support their fellow workers in the fight for your protection and liberty." The following was issued to the Press:—

" IRISH RAILWAY STRIKE.

" It is necessary to make some explanation to the public giving a brief history of this unfortunate dispute in connection with the Irish railways.

" On Friday morning, 15th inst., two employés were dismissed by the management of the G. S. & W. Railway at Kingsbridge Goods Depot for refusing to handle goods handed in by a firm of timber merchants in Dublin, whose men were out on strike. The rest of the men employed in the same department immediately struck work in sympathy with their fellows, who they considered were asked to perform work degrading to their manhood and a violation of their principles.

" An official of the society of which one of the two men was a member attended with a deputation of the men to try and come to some agreement that would have avoided the terrible consequences which have since taken place.

" This action of the G. S. & W. Railway was followed by the M. G. W. Railway and the Great Northern with like consequences. An official of the society also endeavoured to meet the management of the latter company, together with the two men who had been suspended, at which interview the men concerned were informed that they were dismissed the service.

“ Another attempt was made to get the management of the L. and N. W. at North Wall to come to some arrangement with a view to a settlement. This without avail, and it may be stated that the responsible heads of the two last-mentioned companies were absent and other officials in charge who had no authority to do anything without instruction, and who, it is reasonable to suppose, had no authority to dismiss any of the employés.

“ The men employed in other departments soon became affected, and this spread with great rapidity. On all hands the men expressed indignation and showed determination of their intention of joining the rest of their fellows in the struggle.”

The “ Irish Worker ” published this :—

“ The momentous hour has come. The officials of the Great Southern and Western, Great Northern, Midland and Great Western, and London and North-Western of Ireland are not prepared to concede the moderate request, made on your behalf, to them.

“ The railway companies have forced the issue upon us. It is proved by resolutions passed at a directors’ meeting of the D. & S. E. Railway held yesterday that the directors of the firms in dispute have deliberately, by ‘ *tendering a test consignment of traffic*,’ brought the railway companies to their aid in this struggle.

“ Your plain duty is toward the men who have been dismissed and those who have come out on behalf of these men. If the fight is to be won loyalty and promptitude are essential. Let Irish railwaymen by a decisive blow show that tyranny of this kind can no longer be tolerated, and that you intend to support your mates in this fight.

“ No hesitation, no wavering, and the fight is won for your protection and liberty.”

Mr. E. J. Kelly, M.P., after the strike had extended, wrote stating that six Members of Parliament offered their services in the dispute. The Lord Lieutenant sent for the General Secretary and President, but he only wanted information as to the position. No result came of the interview with the Lord Lieutenant, the offer of the six M.P.’s and the Lord Mayor of Dublin and other mayors, the companies declining to meet any of them. So the strike developed into one of endurance. The military were out and were also handling traffic. After what seemed almost superhuman efforts to settle the matter, with every possible personal influence, the G. S. & W. R. insisted upon an absolute withdrawal of the manifesto issued by O’Meara on September 15th, with an expression of regret for leaving work without notice, give an undertaking to handle all traffic offered, and to obey all the commands of the officers. Applications to be made to the heads of departments to take on such hands as they may require for existing vacancies. The company contended that as they had had frequent strikes of various kinds the last few years they were determined at any cost to reman the system, and they hoped that the majority of their employés would tender applications for re-employment and that a lasting peace would ensue, and regretted that the men should have been led into such a mistake that had cost

the country so heavily, and trusted they would accept this olive branch held out to them. The Midland Great Western did practically the same.

It was agreed to hand the following statement to the Press :—

“ The following is a brief statement of the men’s position at the present time :—

“ Various agencies have been at work the last few days trying to effect a settlement.

“ After the question of handling the traffic from the firms in dispute with their employés has been got out of the way, the whole position has been narrowed down to one of reinstatement without penalty of the whole of the men who had struck work.

“ On this point representation has been made to various railway companies by deputations of their employés, the Lord Lieutenant, the Lord Mayors of Dublin and Cork, Mayor of Waterford, and the six Members of Parliament for Dublin.

“ The railway companies have demanded the return of the men to work under the most humiliating conditions, reserving to themselves the right to victimise any of their employés who ceased work as a protest against the action of the railway companies in dismissing their comrades.

“ The men on all railways have determined that no man shall be victimised, and the telegrams received from every centre show that the men are absolutely unanimous, and are determined to support the requests made by deputations without penalty. In the interest of the public conveniences we trust the railway companies will recognise the reasonableness of the men’s proposals, and agree to bring the crisis to a close, otherwise they must accept the responsibility of a continuance of a dispute with all its attendant consequences.”

The E.C. kept their sittings and activities outside up to October 5th. The strike illustrated the difficulty that must be when railwaymen intervene in the disputes of other bodies. During that period the General Secretary was wanted at the Royal Commission, and the President and two E.C. representatives at the A.G.M. There were many cases of victimisation, and an appeal was made to the branches all over the country to help them, and monetary grants were made. The resolution, as under, is the requiem, and is the sixty-ninth of the seventy resolutions passed on the matter :—

“ That this Committee, after prolonged sittings and having given careful consideration to the circumstances surrounding the Irish strike, and without expressing an opinion as to its cause, desire to place on record our high appreciation of the stamina of the Irish railwaymen who struck work and remained firm for the reinstatement of their fellows who had been dismissed. We further desire to express our emphatic condemnation of the companies, the Press, and other capitalistic organisations, who organised every dishonourable effort to weaken the men’s position, and persistently refused to in any way meet this E.C. or officers of the society to negotiate a settlement on the men’s behalf; also that the Government of Ireland either have no power or no desire to intervene and compel the companies to effect any settlement, demonstrates the imperative need for complete recognition of the men’s Trade

Union and all railwaymen being organised in one railway Trade Union. Further, we deeply regret that after the noble fight of the men on the G. S. & W. R. and the L. & N. W. R., a fatal weakness and return to work of some Waterford men on October 2nd gave the companies their opportunity, in conjunction with their loyal blacklegs—including members of the Railway Clerks' Association, locomen, and other grades on the G. N. of I. and the M. & G. W., who were the real dead weight, and who declined to stand by their dismissed colleagues—to continue their defiant attitude at the critical moment when victory and reinstatement of all men was well within their grasp. These factors compelled the men's deputations to accept the most humiliating conditions of settlement without any guarantees of reinstatement to any man, and with a full knowledge that dismissal and victimisation of many of their leaders and prominent members would ensue. This should call for the serious consideration of our members and the railwaymen generally, as to the best means of solidifying the whole of the grades of railwaymen in one organisation to meet these difficult situations."

The events of one year are mirrored in the President's address at Carlisle, and the President, Mr. Bellamy, was re-elected. These two years were the most eventful in the history of the society. But the outstanding feature was, that the General Secretary had an assistant who was heart and soul with him and took upon his own shoulders all that he could. Such unanimity in leadership was never shown before and stands as an example of what should be in Trade Union leadership. I close this chapter with Mr. Williams' reference to the year in his 1911 Annual Report:—

"The past year has been the most strenuous in the whole history of the society. The unrest which displayed itself in the early part of the year grew in force and extent, until in the latter half it had developed into open conflict, and in August your Executive Committee was specially convened to consider a very difficult situation. You are all familiar with what happened. For the first time in history the railwaymen were called upon to join in a national stoppage. The response was electrical. The power of organised railway labour was for the first time demonstrated, and after long years of uphill work we succeeded in making railway Trade Unionism a force to be reckoned with. Having thus accomplished one of life's ambitions it is for us to hold high the banner free from reproach and unsoiled with dishonour; to do this it behoves every member to realise that he is under an obligation to be loyal to his convictions. We have lofty ideals and far-reaching aims for the banishment of degrading servitude, and the vindication of the inherent rights of those who labour to something like a fair share of its rewards is part of our creed. To assert the claims of flesh and blood to priority of importance over those of property is one of our duties. To what more noble end can energies be devoted than this? The field is a wide one and there is a rich ingathering for the patient workers. With a cause so exalted and a scope of usefulness so extended we only need to persevere to succeed."

Chapter XXII.

IRELAND—PROTECTIVE ACTIONS—BURKING RECOGNITION—DEATH OF J. E. WILLIAMS.

FOR two years there had been no rest. Strife and constructive work had gone hand in hand. Those who thought might well think that here history would repeat itself and we should settle down into a period of quietness, but not from then to our Jubilee was it to be. The Press of that day echoed the hope, and one after another in varying language expressed the hope that we had temporarily at least reached the end of Labour troubles and unrest. During the two years we have just left behind they had grown more frequent, spread wider, and each added one seemed to be of greater import than the one which preceded it. We had only just taken hold of the year 1912 when Mr. Williams called the Executive together to consider the miners' strike. Branches were asking instructions what their attitude should be towards the conveyance of troops to disturbed districts, and whether they were justified in passing blackleg traffic to those collieries at which attempts were made to work them. Some even urged that we should present a maximum of demands programme to the companies and then join hands with the miners. The miners' leaders had requested that we should not intervene, adding that they were quite capable of dealing with imported labour, and that self-restraint rendered military precautions unnecessary. Others wanted us to finance the miners to the extent of £20,000, and yet others to call the Joint Executives of the railway unions together to take united action. The Executives waved all these demands aside, pointed to the facts that were before them, and to that of a previous resolution of the year before to Acton and Ealing. There was more diplomacy than tears in the E.C.'s "regret" that they had no funds to comply with the financial request and had no authority to do the other things. Our union's own difficulty in a miners' strike, as always, was finance. Every miners' strike, right from our very birth, had always depleted our funds more than any matter that was purely domestic. The infant A.S.R.S. had to meet depleted funds by borrowing to keep faith with rules. In this one the Finance Committee—whose duty in estimate had always to be liberal, while urging conservative methods in expenditure—gave an estimate that the cost would be £100,000. How near their estimate was is seen in the fact that it cost us £98,473 18s. 1d., and the bank overdraft was not paid off till May, 1913, and the railway stock, which for sentimental reasons so many were against, in this, as in other cases, served us in good stead, not being a matter of an hour to secure money upon, because of their facile mobility.

Other organisations were a further trouble. A transport workers' strike took place, and shoals of ill-considered resolutions were sent to the Head Office calling for a sympathetic strike. Whilst such was a token of growing sympathy with general labour, it was not always practicable with railwaymen. There was hardly an industry in which a strike took place but what railwaymen were affected, and if a sympathetic strike was indulged in it would be reducing the organisation to chaos, the funds in zero, and might destroy organisation altogether. Such would by their very nature be sectional; those being near the dispute the most eager, and those more distant, lacking both knowledge and sympathy, would not come out, and so it would lay everything in ruins, and the work of the pioneers in building and conserving would have the foundations they laid torn up by later folly. Unreason pitted against thought can very soon destroy in a day the work of decades. The leaders had to take long views and conservative views; plungers in policy are not fit to govern. A reckless action may have in it a long chain of circumstances of which there is no prospect to the end. Both good and bad deeds have an indestructible life. It was only a few months before that Mr. Bellamy, the President, had said at Carlisle: "Recent occurrences have pointed to the growth of the idea of the sympathetic strike and to a welcome extension of the solidarity of the Labour forces of the country. These developments raise many serious problems. The transport industry, and especially the railway part of it, is so intimately bound up with every other trade and industry, and the doctrine of the sympathetic strike, as applied, is so far-reaching, that this Congress might usefully consider the matter and make some declaration of policy that would clear the air and define the future action of this society in similar disputes should they arise. One thing it seems necessary to say at this stage, no strike of any kind ought to take place until the E.C. of the organisation affected has been consulted and its sanction obtained." That utterance was the wisdom of four decades before, because Dr. Langley had said it with regard to our first unauthorised strike in 1872, and laid down in telling language what should and should not be. Rush means folly, and folly disaster. It is easy to destroy; it is hard work and much thought that is required to build. The resolution the Congress passed barely touches the problem the President raised and the other officers indirectly. Under the heading of "Local Outbursts" the A.G.M. passed this:—

"That this Congress, having given careful consideration to the many and varied circumstances in which railwaymen are involved in trade disputes and the consequent danger that follows sectional and local outbursts, hereby instruct the General Secretary to ask the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress to consider this question with view to uniform policy and concerted action being taken. We also instruct the Executive Committee and General Secretary that no support can be given to men who leave work without the authority of the Executive Committee."

Our rulers, however, read into it the wider meaning and issued a circular, and the E.C. also condemned unauthorised movements, and

used strong language in their condemnation. The circular put the facts before the members :—

“ FELLOW MEMBERS,—Owing to a large number of branches writing me in connection with what they call ‘ blackleg traffic ’ and the difference of opinion expressed as to what attitude our members should adopt in the many and varying circumstances in which they are called upon to work from time to time, I venture to address you on the matter. It is hardly necessary for me to say that I appreciate to the full the splendid spirit of comradeship that actuates our members in their anxiety to help fellow Trade Unionists who happen to be in dispute and fighting a battle on a matter of importance to every loyal Trade Unionist. But as chief officer of the union, responsible for carrying out the rules and decisions of the governing bodies, I feel compelled to draw particular attention to the very difficult and peculiar position of railwaymen as compared with any other class of workers.

“ The first point of importance is the fact that railway companies are governed by statute and are responsible as common carriers to take any goods tendered to them. A refusal to do so carries with it a very heavy penalty, which can be enforced in a court of law. It will, therefore, be realised that whatever may be the view of a particular company they are compelled, unlike other employers, to accept traffic offered them. Again, our members have only to think for a moment to realise there cannot possibly be any dispute in any industry but what in some way or another the railwaymen would be affected, and, therefore, if the principle of the sympathetic strike is to be followed our members must always be involved.

“ I may also draw attention to the fact that in practically every dispute that has taken place during the last two years we have never been asked for our co-operation or advice, but immediately a strike occurs our members have been simply asked to either come out in support or refuse to handle traffic, and when many of them have, in loyalty to their union, acted in accordance with our rules or sought their officers’ advice, they have been insulted and termed ‘ blacklegs.’ This, I need hardly say, has very much aggravated the situation and prevented that smooth working between one union and another which is so essential to success.

“ The most important point that our members should remember is that railwaymen in all parts of the country are to-day looking forward to a great united effort by our union for a reduction in hours and generally improved conditions, and they are justified in their hope by the continued increase in our membership and the solidarity of all grades. I would, therefore, ask them to reflect and see how these sectional and local disputes are frittering away their power without any real benefit to themselves. Indeed, we are sapping our strength in sham fights instead of preparing our forces for a real and genuine effort to improve the lot of every

railwayman grade in the railway service. How can we hope to meet the railway companies as representing capital on one side unless we can show that we not only speak in the name of railway labour, but that our members are loyal to the rules of the organisation? . . .

"The A.G.M. and the E.C. have from time to time given their decisions against these sectional and unauthorised stoppages. The rules are very clear and definite, and our experience is a bitter one. I therefore urge our members to recognise all that is involved in the question, recognise their duty to the organisation, and by a determination to abide by their contracts and observe agreements, and, above all, that any policy other than this will not only fail to improve the lot of our members, which should be our first consideration, but will inevitably lead to anarchy and disruption.

"Yours faithfully,

"J. E. WILLIAMS, General Secretary."

The "Manchester Guardian," the best paper in these isles, commented on it:—

"The officials of the railwaymen's union have issued a statement and a circular which must make many of the opponents of Trade Unionism, on preconceived notions, rub their eyes in bewilderment. . . . Briefly, the circular warns the men against engaging in sectional sympathetic strikes with all kinds of labour, such as, for instance, the Dublin transport workers, now on strike, or the Salford dockers, on the grounds (1) that railway companies are governed by statute and are compelled to carry goods tendered to them, so that any refusal to handle them may mean heavy financial loss; and (2) that it is important that railwaymen should husband their strength toward a united effort for improved conditions, reduction of hours, and official recognition of the union. There are, of course, other grounds for the railwaymen's leaders' dislike of the sympathetic strike. Railway workers are concerned 'sympathetically' in virtually every labour dispute in the kingdom, and they are commonly called upon to come out in disputes on which they have not been consulted and of which they have actually not been aware of till they have received a peremptory demand for co-operation. That this is unfair to the railwaymen is obvious. They put their employers in a position of hardship, involving legal penalties, and, of course, injure themselves. But that they should give as the first reason of their dislike of sectional strikes the legal obligation of their employers is surely significant. It ought to mean that the united effort for 'recognition' will be met half-way, and that with the granting of it free and equal bargaining for improved conditions will become possible."

This, with other and deeper causes, led to recognition. Nor was effort confined to that circular. J. H. Thomas, with gifted speech and clear reason, lifted the fiery cross at Victoria Park, Wigan, Bristol,

and a score of other places. He urged as a reason why they should not indulge in strikes but for self-defence, the rapidly increasing membership, the accretion of funds, the moral obligations, the duty both to their organisation and the companies; to give the leaders an opportunity for bargaining by stating the fact that they were a disciplined host, and the great objective recognition. Agreements carried responsibility; ability required courage to face difficult situations. There must be fairplay on both sides, and they could not complain of broken agreements if they themselves broke them. They must not prostitute strength by folly. The power of the strike must remain intact; but it should be the last resort and not the first. So also the President and General Secretary at so many places rubbed the lessons in and indulged in plain speaking. They were leaders that led, and courage is always the best investment in leadership.

At the first meeting of the E.C. in 1912 Mr. B. Finnigan, the Irish representative, resigned, and Ward took his place. The following resolutions and amendments give the history of his equivocations during the 1911 strike:—

“Moved by Henderson and Edwards: ‘That we decide to accede to the application of Mr. Halls, and ask him to come here at once.’

“Moved by Henderson and Fagg: ‘That after hearing Bro. Halls re Bro. Finnigan working during the late strike, and Bro. Finnigan’s defence of this action, this Committee condemn Bro. Finnigan’s action in working, also his action in supporting an amendment to the Joint Committee’s edict to strike at once, and hereby say that the interests of the railwaymen of the United Kingdom would be best served by his retiring from this Committee at once.’

“Amendment by Niven and Cramp: ‘This Executive Committee after very careful consideration of the whole of the correspondence and having listened to the explanations of our Organiser, Mr. W. Halls, and our colleague, Mr. B. Finnigan, re his conduct in the recent railway crisis hereby express our most emphatic condemnation of our colleague’s action throughout the most critical period of the crisis in so far as he himself did not respond to the Joint Committee’s appeal of the 17th August to cease work until the night of the 19th, and further, from the evidence submitted to us, we point out that Finnigan used the position he holds in this organisation to induce certain railwaymen to remain at work and others who had gone on strike to return to work against the desire and wish of the local strike committee, such actions as these by one of our colleagues deserve the most severe condemnation of this E.C. We very deeply regret our rules do not give us the authority to remove him from this Committee, but would call the attention of the members of our organisation in Ireland to the powers they possess under Rule 3, clause 3.’

The resolution was carried.

“Moved by Fagg and Robinson: ‘That it be recorded in the minutes that Bro. Finnigan attended before the E.C. on Wednesday

morning and stated that, having considered Resolution No. 25 of this Committee, he realised that, whilst he had endeavoured to act as he considered in the best interests of the society in Ireland, he had made a grave mistake, for which he desired to apologise very fully to this Committee. He would accept our decision so far as this Committee was concerned, but hopes that he may be allowed to continue his activities on behalf of the society in Ireland.' ”

Carried unanimously.

It would have been something of a novelty if he had been contumacious, and the E.C. itself had struck by refusing to sit with him. They were evidently suspicious of him during the Irish strike which followed the national one, and when the E.C. met at 7, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin, they had him before them and presented him with this clean bill of health.

It was agreed that Mr. B. Finnigan appear before the Committee in order to ascertain what position he has taken up since he left London.

“ Moved by Billett and Hooton: ‘ That this Committee, having interviewed and given careful consideration to the statement made by Bro. Finnigan as to his position and action in regard to the present situation in Ireland, are of opinion he has acted wisely and to the best interests of the railwaymen of Ireland, and we, therefore, decide to invite him to join this Executive Committee and take part in our proceedings.’ ”

Having, as we said, resigned the E.C. early in 1912 at the September sitting, the General Secretary said :—

“ I regret to report that a number of our prominent members in Dublin have set machinery at work for the formation of a separate society for Ireland, called the Irish Railway Employés’ Trade Union. Application forms for membership have been distributed in many centres, a copy of which will be submitted to you. Immediately I became aware of what was going on I communicated with the individuals concerned and any replies recieved will be submitted to you, with all other correspondence.”

“ Moved by Cuthbertson and Ward: ‘ That having had our attention drawn to the action of certain of our members in Ireland in attempting to form a new society for railwaymen in Ireland, regrets that our members concerned are so foolish as to endeavour to divide the railway workers in Ireland from their fellows in England, Scotland, and Wales, having in view the proved fact that such division in the ranks of the workers is inimical to their interests. We, therefore, notify those members so engaged that such action is inimical to the interests of this society, and warn them that by such action they bring themselves within Rule 9, clause 14, which this Committee will rigorously enforce. Further, we would draw the attention of all Irish railwaymen to the fact that this society has been, and still is, the best standard of organisation for railwaymen for Trade Union purposes, and warns them to avoid any attempted splitting up of the railwaymen of the British Isles.’ ”



P. HEWLETT

F. C. FAGG
(Trustees)

G. W. ALCOCK

“First amendment by Law and Robinson: ‘That our attention having been called to an attempt on the part of some of our members to form a new society in Ireland, and thereby act detrimentally to the interests of this society, we decide to at once expel the following from membership: T. Murphy, D. Traynor, B. Finnigan, E. O’Sullivan, and further instruct our Irish Organiser to make inquiries as to whether any other members are concerned in this matter.’

Second amendment by Cramp and Henderson: “That in view of the fact that it has been clearly proved to our satisfaction that Messrs. Finnigan, of the Broadstone Branch, T. Murphy, of the Kingsbridge Branch, and E. O’Sullivan, of the Westland Row Branch, have been guilty of attempting to injure the interests of this society in Ireland, we hereby decide to expel the same under the provisions of Rule 9, clause 14. Further, as it has been brought to our notice that Messrs. O’Meara and Traynor, of the Kingsbridge Branch, Messrs. Harford and Hands, of the Broadstone Branch, and Bro. J. Murphy, of the Westland Row Branch, have also been connected with this attempt, we instruct the General Secretary to obtain all available information in connection with the whole matter, and report to the next ordinary or special meeting of this Committee.’”

The second amendment, when put as a substantive motion, was carried unanimously. The A.G.M. reinstated Finnigan. The further inquiry into the other names in the above led the E.C. in December to pass these two resolutions:—

“Moved by Cramp and Henderson: ‘That this E.C., having now obtained the desired information upon this matter, decides to expel, under the provisions of Rule 9, clause 14, Messrs. Traynor, of the Kingsbridge Branch, and Hands, of the Broadstone Branch, as both are guilty of attempting to injure the interests of this society.’

“Moved by Cramp and Billett: “That this E.C. having considered the establishment of this and similar societies in various parts of the United Kingdom, are of the opinion that a concerted plan exists among certain members of the capitalist class to weaken the influence of Trade Unions and divide the working class with a view to preventing the latter continuing the forward movement commenced in 1911. We, therefore, decide to bring the matter before the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress and the Executive Committee of the Labour Party with a view to a national exposure being made and suitable action being taken to defeat this movement.’”

These efforts evidently did not meet with success, and the members in Ireland remained true to the union. They had good cause to resent their actions, because they had benefited by intimacy with us, and these actions, to use the proverbial expression was enough to make Scammell the Irish pioneer, turn in his grave. We have given the Irish finance during the period of Mr. Bell, and it is expedient at this stage to move a few years forward. At the December sitting the E.C. had a request from the Ormskirk Branch to adopt an organising scheme with a view

to increasing our membership in Ireland, and they took the request sympathetically, instructing the General Secretary to report on the Irish question at the next sitting, and he reported as follows:—

“GENTLEMEN,

“In accordance with Resolution No. 59 of your last December meeting, I have obtained information with regard to the position in Ireland, and herewith append statements showing:—

“1. Members, giving the number of members in each scale and the total in each branch on December 31st, 1915, specifically showing the figures given by Mr. Rimmer in his statement of members actually in compliance with rules on December 31st, 1915, and the figures given by the branch secretaries on their return of members in each scale on that date.

“2. Total number of members in each scale, giving Mr. Rimmer's and the branch figures separate.

“3. Particulars of the total gross income and expenditure for each year, from 1900 to 1914 inclusive, setting forth the loss or gain on each year, and the total loss for the 15 years' working. Membership in Ireland in each of the years in question is also given.

“4. Detailed statement of the income, giving total amount received in connection with each item, from the years 1900 to 1914 inclusive. Particulars of the various items of expenditure are also given, the totals for the years in question being shown.

“In connection with statements Nos. 1 and 2 on membership, it would appear from Mr. Rimmer's return that a total of only 22 members are not in compliance with rules on December 31st, 1915. However, it will be observed in 17 branches Mr. Rimmer shows more members in compliance with rules than the branch secretary shows as being on the books. These branches are as follows:—

Bandon.	Inchicore No. 2.	Omagh.
Cork No. 2.	North Wall.	Rosslare Harbour.
Cookstown.	Galway.	Strabane.
Drogheda.	Kilfree Junction.	Thurles.
Dublin (Amiens).	Londonderry.	Tuam.
Dublin (Broadstone).	Mallow.	

“The lists referred to include those members serving with H.M. forces, which, according to branch returns, total 126.

“According to Mr. Rimmer's figures, over 99 per cent. of members are in compliance with rules on December 31st, 1915.

“With regard to statements Nos. 3 and 4, these speak for themselves, but I would remind you that the average loss per year for the 15 years referred to is over £1,050. I may say that the accounts in question do not take into consideration any proportion of expenses for Head Office administration, and this, of course, will amount to a good sum of money.

" In connection with your resolution on this matter, I have received letters from the following branches, with various suggestions :—

" COLLOONEY.—Suggest three additional Organisers for a short period.

" DUBLIN (KINGSBRIDGE) AND (AMIENS STREET).—To appoint local delegates at centres such as Dublin, Cork, Belfast, and Limerick, whose duty would be to canvass members at their work and attend at pay depots to receive weekly subscriptions, obtain lists of members over five weeks in arrears, and endeavour to get them to pay up.

" DUBLIN (BROADSTONE).—Similar suggestion to Kingsbridge, but with addition that collectors be allotted to various outlying districts, on the lines of large insurance companies' collectors. To visit all railway-men in district, hold meetings, distribute literature, possess cash, duplicate collecting books. Money to be remitted daily to district secretaries.

" Yours faithfully,

" J. E. WILLIAMS, General Secretary.

" March, 1916."

STATEMENT OF MEMBERSHIP, IRISH BRANCHES, DECEMBER, 1915.

Branch.	Scale A.		Scale B.		Scale C.		Scale D.		Death Grant.	Total.	
	Mr. R.	Branch	Mr. R.	Branch	Mr. R.	Branch	Mr. R.	Branch		Mr. R.	Branch
Athenry.....	20	20	4	7	...	...	...	...	...	24	27
Athlone.....	73	85	9	11	...	...	...	...	...	82	96
Bandon	25	19	10	10	1	1	...	...	...	36	30
Belfast	120	122	13	11	23	23	...	...	...	156	156
Ballyshannon	8	8	30	32	...	...	2	...	...	40	40
Banbridge	6	6	15	15	1	1	1	1	...	23	23†
Bray	72	72	...	26	...	1	...	...	...	72	99
Carrick-on-Sea	10	10	46	46	...	...	...	...	...	56	56
Cavan	14	12	9	14	...	...	...	...	...	23	26
Claremorris	19	22	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	20	24
Clonmany.....	...	...	17	17	...	...	...	...	...	17	17†
Collooney.....	12	12	21	24	...	...	...	...	...	33	36
Cork No. 1.....	127	127	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	127	127†
„ No. 2.....	96	96	59	56	1	1	...	...	...	156	153
„ No. 3.....	28	24	10	10	2	2	...	...	...	40	43*
Cookstown	5	6	42	33	3	2	9	6	...	59	47
„ Junction	Only opened this year.										
Drogheda	16	17	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	18	17
Dublin (Amiens St.) .	68	72	1	2	1	...	8	...	3	81	74
„ (Broadstone) .	215	204	28	29	...	...	...	...	1	244	233
„ (Kingsbridge) .	116	152	2	2	...	...	...	...	3	121	154
„ (Kingstown) .	28	26	18	20	1	1	...	...	...	47	47
„ (Inchicore 1) .	195	213	18	17	...	...	...	...	...	213	230
„ („ 2) .	96	66	15	10	18	11	...	...	...	129	87
„ (North Wall) .	281	272	2	2	...	...	39	26	...	322	300
„ (Westl'nd R'w) .	163	163	25	25	6	6	...	...	...	194	194†
Dundalk	34	34	11	13	3	3	...	...	1	49	50
Dunmanway	32	32	10	15	...	...	...	...	...	42	47
Ennis	34	37	9	10	...	...	...	...	...	43	47
Galway	30	17	9	4	...	...	...	...	...	39	21
Greenore .....	...	...	44	44	...	...	...	...	...	44	44
Kilkenny	7	7	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	8	8
Kilfree Junction	6	6	3	3	...	...	18	17	...	27	26
Limerick Junction ...	13	13	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	14	14
„ „ No. 2	26	28	40	44	...	...	...	...	...	66	72
Lisburn	27	28	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	28	29
Londonderry	9	9	177	165	15	15	3	3	...	204	192
Mallow	19	18	9	9	...	...	...	...	...	28	27
Mullingar	29	41	2	3	...	...	...	...	...	31	44
Newry	15	17	1	3	1	...	...	...	...	17	20
Newtownbutler	24	24	9	9	...	...	...	...	...	33	33
Omagh	23	23	3	2	8	6	...	...	...	34	31
Portadown	14	14	6	6	...	...	...	...	...	20	20
Rosslare Harbour ...	7	7	24	22	...	...	42	37	...	73	66
Sligo	48	49	22	22	...	...	...	...	...	70	66
Strabane	41	39	16	14	...	...	...	...	...	57	53
Stranorlar.....	22	24	35	40	...	...	...	...	...	57	64
Thurles	9	8	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	10	9
Tralee	50	53	19	19	...	...	2	2	...	71	74
Tuam.....	36	34	11	10	...	...	...	...	...	47	44
Waterford.....	44	53	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	44	53
Westport	34	38	54	64	...	...	...	...	...	88	102
Wexford	39	36	59	61	1	3	4	5	...	103	105

* Total includes seven on active service ; the particulars of scales have not been given.

† Branch not made any returns to this office. Mr. Rimmer's figures taken.

With regard to those shown as paying for Death Grant these particulars are given by Rimmer. In the returns to Head Office they will be shown as members of Scale A.

Banbridge Branch was not opened until January 14th and should not have been included, but Mr. Rimmer included it in his statement.

(No. 2.)

Statement of Membership, Irish Branches—(Continued).

	Totals.	Mr. Rimmer's Figures.	Branch Figures.
Scale A		2,485	2,515
Scale B		972	1,007
Scale C		85	76
Scale D		128	97
Death Grant.....		10	—
Cork No. 3 show seven in Army but no particulars of scales...		—	7
Totals		3,680	3,702

(No. 3.)

Particulars of income and expenditure from and on behalf of the Irish branches from the years 1900 to 1914, inclusive; membership also shown :—

Year.	Income. £	Expenditure. £	Loss. £	Gain. £	Membership
1900 ...	906 ...	1,718 ...	812 ...	— ...	1,093
1901 ...	1,276 ...	1,492 ...	216 ...	— ...	1,637
1902 ...	1,189 ...	1,475 ...	286 ...	— ...	1,683
1903 ...	1,214 ...	2,015 ...	801 ...	— ...	1,633
1904 ...	1,118 ...	2,358 ...	1,240 ...	— ...	1,313
1905 ...	1,308 ...	1,422 ...	114 ...	— ...	1,744
1906 ...	1,764 ...	1,771 ...	7 ...	— ...	2,812
1907 ...	2,560 ...	2,090 ...	— ...	470 ...	3,999
1908 ...	2,617 ...	2,491 ...	— ...	126 ...	3,335
1909 ...	2,338 ...	2,147 ...	— ...	191 ...	2,740
1910 ...	2,193 ...	2,491 ...	298 ...	— ...	2,877
1911 ...	2,596 ...	9,277 ...	6,681 ...	— ...	3,578
1912 ...	2,091 ...	6,276 ...	4,185 ...	— ...	2,613
1913 ...	2,250 ...	4,308 ...	2,058 ...	— ...	3,169
1914 ...	2,499 ...	2,342 ...	— ...	157 ...	3,219
Totals	£27,919	£43,673	£16,689	£944	

On the fifteen years' working there appears a net loss of £15,754.

In the years 1898 and 1899 the following expenses were incurred (consequent upon the Cork and Bandon Railway strike):—

1898.	Assistance from H.O. for Donation ...	£1,115	
	„ Legal	591	
	Protection Grants by E.C. (weekly) ...	5,369	
	Emigration „ „	250	
			£7,325
1899.	Protection Grants by E.C. (weekly) ...	1,038	
	Emigration „ „ „	52	
			£1,090
	Total.....		£8,415

Details of the income and expenditure for the years 1900 to 1914, inclusive :—

INCOME.		Total.
Dues—Scale A		£22,202
Scale B		3,921
Scale C		57
Scale D		13
Entrance fees		755
Voluntary Sick Fund		103
Orphan Fund subscriptions and donations		57
Death Grants—Scale A		5
Bank Interest		136
H.O. Benevolent Fund		11
Goods, medals, badges, etc.		208
Political Fund Levy		326
Sundries		225
Total		£27,919

EXPENDITURE.		
Death and Disablement Benefits		£2,625
Orphan Fund		6,321
Voluntary Sick Fund		86
Donation and Suspension Pay.....		5,881
Protection—Conferences		1,989
Grants		5,977
Strike Pay		6,088*
Salaries and expenses, Irish Office		5,015
Rent and sundries, Irish Office		555
Legal defence of members		3,229
Irish T.U.C.		240
A.G.M. and E.C. delegates' expenses		612
Branch secretaries' wages and grants		1,579
Branch rents, postage, and incidentals		3,463
District Councils' grants		13
Total		£43,673

“ Moved by Cramp and Marchbank : ‘ That this Committee, having carefully considered the report upon the state of our organisation in Ireland, regret to find that so little progress has been made, both in membership and financial stability, as compared with the remainder of the United Kingdom. We recognise, however, that the difference is due to the existence of geographical and historical difficulties which the majority of British railwaymen have not had to confront. We welcome the slight improvement which has recently taken place, as disclosed by the report, and decide to make an endeavour to apply any machinery which may be adopted to deal with the conditions of

* This is the amount of Strike Pay paid out in 1911.

other railwaymen to the Irish railways. Further, we decide to postpone our decision upon the methods of organisation in Ireland until after our efforts in that direction have been concluded. In the meantime, we recommend our branches in Ireland to use every effort to strengthen their membership in order to assist us in accomplishing the foregoing.' "

In addition to this, there are the voluntary subscriptions that have been made in the various disputes in which they have been engaged.

At the end of 1911 the constitution and procedure of the new Conciliation Boards were promulgated, and the "Railway Review" published them in its issue of January 4th, 1912, and afterwards as a pamphlet for sale. They considered all the functions and methods of the Boards. That the settlement had not satisfied all is only saying what always happens, and calls for the resignation of those responsible for the settlement followed. Those who do not know all the facts and all the difficulties are the most vigorous of critics, but it certainly was a new charter and a decided improvement on the old, and was worth the strike to obtain it. All restlessness in the end makes for progress, and other things soon loomed in view that made even it secondary, and later more useful still. To cite the protests as a whole is more than these pages will bear, but perhaps Swansea was the most stormy. Mr. Thomas does not quail before a hostile audience; he seems rather to glory in it: when "wigs are on the green" it gives him vim. They had prepared a circular which demanded a Special General Meeting to discuss the recent crisis and the actions of the officials. A meeting was held at the Star Theatre with 1,000 present. Interjections came from all quarters, and there was an indescribable din, but it settled down, and Jimmy proceeded to justify deeds done in their name. A promise, however, had to be made that questions would be allowed before he could be allowed to proceed, and the report says: "Mr. Thomas was able for a whole hour to explain the attitude of the Joint Executive and their reasons for the course they had adopted and to attempt to justify them. This he did with such ability and freedom from interruption that it was thought he had got the meeting with him." But it seemed, if anything, to increase their dissatisfaction, and questions were showered on him in shoals, one questioner coming from the Severn Tunnel district being so prolific in quantity and quality that they lost patience with him, and unanimously passed a long resolution in which they expressed the opinion that there was nothing in Thomas's statement that caused them to alter their opinion, that the unique opportunity in the display of solidarity, had completely failed, they had nullified all democratic forms which was the bedrock of Trade Union principles, and that all of them should resign forthwith. So Jimmy was sent empty away singing, "Now the hurly-burly's over and the battle lost and won." But a defeat with Mr. Thomas is only a temporary triumph for his opponents; he wins in the end.

The Government, just after this, issued a return of railwaymen's wages, and never did the much-talked-of "Green Book" of Mr. Bell receive greater justification, and which Mr. Williams later in a

deputation to the Prime Minister (Mr. Asquith) urging the nationalisation of railways, used with telling effect. The list was appalling. By all comparisons with hours and wages of other callings they were at the nadir point of remuneration. An incident happened at this time also which illustrated the value of working-class representation in Parliament. The Great Eastern had brought in an Omnibus Bill for sanction, and it was made an occasion of showing the disabilities of clerks on this railway, and Mr. Wardle made a most effective speech, which Mr. Thomas backed. It passed the Second Reading, but later a defeat ensued and concessions had to be made.

The Conciliation Boards soon got to work, with the thin edge of the wedge in recognition, as many of the officials were secretaries of the Boards. To cull a page—a specimen page—from the E.C. records, which might be lengthened: Thomas, 26; Holmes, 9; A. J. Williams, 9; Loraine, 14; J. R. Bell, 8; whilst Charles and White, who had been among the most active secretaries, with others, had their share. They were more equalised later.

The united action of the Joint Executives in a railway dispute led anew to the desire for amalgamation, this time under a new name, “Fusion of Forces.” A ballot was taken of the A.S.R.S., the G.R.W.U., and the Signalmen and Pointsmen’s Societies, the two latter securing the necessary two-thirds legally required. That of the A.S.R.S., however, did not, the votes cast being—

	For.	Against.	Neutral.	Total.
England and Wales.	62,578	830	83	63,491
Ireland	1,173	6	2	1,181
Scotland	4,093	24	8	4,125
	67,844	860	93	68,797

which as the membership at the end of 1911 was 116,516, it was not sufficient, which regarding the almost unanimous opinion of the members being in favour, and effort after effort made by the A.S.R.S. to bring it about, was a remarkable finding, which caused the E.C. to pass strong resolutions, and they stretched a previous resolution in reference to voting, by giving the branches another opportunity to vote by bringing in those who had not voted with this result—

	1st Ballot.			2nd Ballot.		Received June 1st.		Received June 3rd.		Found in A.G.M. and T.U.C.		Gross Total.		
	Yes.	No.	Spoilt.	For	Agt.	For	Agt.	For	Agt.	For	Agt.	For	Agt.	Sp'ilt
England & Wales	62578	830	83	7615	238	1090	17	1112	17	209	—	72604	1102	83
Ireland	1173	6	2	215	59	59	—	32	—	7	—	1486	65	2
Scotland	4093	24	8	638	5	94	—	30	—	8	2	4863	31	8
Gross Total...	67844	860	93	8468	302	1243	17	1174	17	224	2	78953	1198	93

A Special General Meeting of all parties formulated the rules; they were passed, signed, sealed, and delivered to the Registrar, and thus ended one of the great dramatic chapters in railway organisation.

On 20th March, during the recent coal strike, Mr. Partridge, general manager, dismissed several prominent members of our Shepherd's Bush Branch on the plea that there was not sufficient work for them. This was done irrespective of the fact that many men who were junior in service to our members were kept at work. The General Secretary reported :—

“It appears that a general desire was expressed amongst the men employed on this railway for Conciliation Boards to be formed in order to cope, if possible, with the tyranny of Mr. Partridge, and also to obtain improved conditions of service. An inspector was sent round by Mr. Partridge to obtain signatures against the proposal to establish any Conciliation Boards, and he made it pretty clear to the men that if they did not sign they would be dismissed. The six members whose claims for the Protection Benefit you will have to consider, refused to sign, and were dismissed under the plea above stated.

“The question was raised in the House of Commons by Mr. Thomas, M.P., and the company, through Sir W. Bull, M.P., repudiated the suggestion that these men were victimised on account of their activity as members of this organisation.

“Finally a demonstration was held in Hyde Park on Sunday, June 2nd, attended by between 20,000 and 30,000 railwaymen, to protest against the vindictive conduct of the manager of the Central London Railway. A resolution pledging support to any action proposed by the Executive Committee was unanimously adopted.”

They had all held numerous offices in the branch. Their names were Messrs. H. H. Dawson, T. H. Eeles, F. A. Ford, W. C. Ives, M. Leahy, and F. Marshall. They included the secretary, the late chairman, treasurer, and three of the branch committee. It aroused intense indignation at the gathering at Hyde Park. They all received the Protection Grant. Mr. M. Leahy became a porter at Unity House. The E.C. passed this resolution :—

“Moved by Vennell and Billett: ‘That this E.C., representing organised railway workers of the United Kingdom who were parties to the recent settlement of August last, and the Conciliation Scheme as recommended by the Royal Commission appointed by all his Majesty's Government, and, further, having endeavoured by all lawful means to insist that our members would loyally carry out their obligation to such scheme, regret to find that the Central London Railway Company have, in our opinion, dismissed a number of their employes for no other reason than that they endeavoured to put such scheme into operation. Arbitration having been offered to the railway company on this matter by our representatives through the Board of Trade, and such offer having been refused, we are morally bound to respect the desire of 30,000 railwaymen expressed in mass meeting assembled, who empowered us to act on their behalf. As evidence of a genuine desire to promote peace, we ask his Majesty's Government, as parties to the above-named agreement, if they are prepared to use their good offices to submit this matter to the Industrial Council, and decide to suspend further action pending the reply to this communication.’ ”

The Irish companies refused to accept the Conciliation Scheme as amended. Messrs. Thomas and Hudson raised the question in the House of Commons and spoke on the matter when the salary of the President of the Board of Trade was discussed, and he pleaded that the Board had no power to compel the companies to accept the scheme.

Mr. Goulding, chairman of the Great Western and Southern, wrote : " The Irish railway companies were not parties to the scheme arrived at by the English companies in the Report of the Railway Commission, but we are parties to the Conciliation Scheme of 1907, which was entered into for seven years, and we are going to continue this to its termination."

That was a real piece of Irish humour, because up to 1911 no decision had been arrived at by the Board. They had been in operation only because they had been simply called together, and to continue it in the same way meant that nothing would be done for the next three years.

The Great Northern, Ireland, returned a similar answer, and also said, mentioning certain grades, that the Board had not received any application from them; they could deal with no application. It was only because the names and grades were not set out in the petition. This also was in 1911. It bristles with humour all the way through, or would do but for the grim facts which underlie them. Complaints were laid before the Commission by the Irish railwaymen, yet because a name was not included the Board of Trade considered it had no power. The Commission was concerned with all railway companies, and the plea put forward, to be valid, every company in the United Kingdom might have pleaded, where they were not named, that they had no part nor lot in the matter. These two companies are named, but the same thing applies to all, including the light railways.

In June the Executive Committee passed the following resolution :—

" Moved by Billett and Vennell : ' That this E.C. learns with surprise and regret the determined attitude and refusal of the Irish railway companies to accept the findings of the Royal Commission appointed by His Majesty's Government to consider the unsatisfactory working of the Conciliation Scheme of 1907, and having regard to the definite promise of the Prime Minister that, if necessary, legislative effect would be given to the findings of this Commission, we hereby call upon His Majesty's Government to take such steps as they consider necessary to redeem this pledge, and that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Prime Minister.' "

In September, after repeated failures to move anyone, the following resolution was passed :—

" Moved by Cramp and Law : ' That this Committee having considered the reply from the Board of Trade to our communication to the Prime Minister on the question of the Irish railway companies and the amended Conciliation Scheme desire to express our opinion that the position was in no way altered by the Irish strike of September, 1911, and that no evidence is adduced in the reply to justify such

an assertion. As there appears to be no probability of the Government taking such action as will compel the Irish railway companies to accept the recommendations of the Royal Commission, we recommend our members to continue to perfect their organisation, industrially and politically, in order that we may in our own time and way obtain that justice for the Irish railwaymen which the Government now denies them. In the meantime we ask the Labour Party to take definite action in the matter.' "

A dispute occurred on the N. E. in November. Nicholas Knox, a Gateshead driver, was charged with drunkenness and assaulting the police, and he was reduced to the grade of mineral driver at a lower wage. It raised the question, no matter whether the man was innocent or guilty, as to the right of the company to interfere with an employé's affairs when off duty; and the matter was accentuated by his fellow workers' belief that a miscarriage of justice had taken place, so that three matters were involved—the companies' right to interfere, the reduction, and the wrong conviction. On December 7th the men struck work in defence of a comrade. Meanwhile, the Head Office had been busy, and Mr. Hudson was sent there. The question of a wrong conviction was raised in the House of Commons, and Mr. Runciman, the Home Secretary, appointed Mr. Chester Jones to inquire into the conviction, which he did, and Knox was reinstated. The terms of settlement were, which was previous to the inquiry:—

" 1. The company will reinstate Knox at once if the result of the Home Office inquiry is to prove that he was not drunk on the night in question, and will pay him at his old rate for all work done by him in the interim.

" 2. All men on strike to report themselves at once for work and to resume duty in their former positions. Work will be found as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made.

" 3. Men to work amicably with and not to molest or annoy such of the company's employés as have not joined in the strike.

" 4. All men who struck work to be fined six days' pay at the standard rate, and no man to be proceeded against for breach of contract who pays the above fine. The fine for men on piecework to be the equivalent of six days' earnings for the average of the three weeks ending Saturday, November 30th.

" 5. The men's representatives state that they deprecate these spasmodic strikes, and consider that, in future, North-Eastern men must not strike except with legal notice to the company, and, in the case of members of a Trade Union, in accordance with the Trade Union rules. They undertake personally to act in accordance with the above, and to do their utmost to influence those for whom they now act and all other North-Eastern men in the same direction.

" The general manager stated that the company were in a position to agree to this settlement in consequence of the men who had been taken on or promoted during the strike having expressed their willingness to accept a money compensation in lieu of the employment or promotion promised to them by the company."

Mr. J. Holmes fought a by-election at Crewe. The candidates and votes were as follows:—

E. Craig (Tory)	6,260
H. Murphy (Liberal)	5,294
J. Holmes (Labour)	2,485

Mr. Williams, in his report, rang out the old A.S.R.S. and rang in the new. He said:—

“VALE, A.S.R.S.

“I have pleasure in stating that, from the standpoint of benefits paid, increase in membership, and work done on behalf of our members, this report is the best and most encouraging ever presented.

“I have to remind you that it is the last that will be issued in the name of the A.S.R.S., and, looking back over a period of 40 years and comparing the position of railwaymen to-day, one can see on all hands the good results that have accrued from the society's past efforts. If these results have been obtained despite our limited power, sectional differences, and divided ranks, what a bright outlook there is for the future with the fusion of forces now an accomplished fact, and the bodies hitherto divided now working together with only one object, viz., the improvement in the condition of every man in the railway service. I am fully conscious of the great and noble efforts made by our members in the past to strengthen the organisation, and the many rebuffs they have received, but the changed conditions necessitate changed methods, and the non-unionist, who in the past has been ever ready to accept everything the union has obtained for him, and who is generally the first to grumble and criticise, but the last to make any sacrifice, must be taught his responsibilities to the union and his fellow workmen. I would, therefore, urge our members, both individually and collectively, to do their utmost so that at the end of 1913 we shall be able to claim that every man working on our railways who is eligible to join the union is a Trade Unionist. There are not wanting signs that the non-unionist is at last beginning to realise his responsibility. Intimidation and victimisation have in the past, and even to-day, on some railways cruelly turned some of our best men on the streets, victims of a system that would not be tolerated for one moment if all were inside the organisation. The pioneers of our movement made many sacrifices for the freedom we to-day enjoy, and it is due to us to see that that freedom is not lightly taken from us. I have frequently warned our members that the pooling arrangements, working agreements, and speeding-up would adversely effect them. The only immediate effective remedy is the eight-hour day, with a living wage for all grades, and this can be accomplished by all men joining the N.U.R., the only organisation catering for all railwaymen. The machinery at our disposal is second to none; our power in commerce and industry is supreme. With one strong pull together 1913 will stand out as a great landmark in the history of railwaymen.”

So far we have tried force and found that it has its limitations, and we have tried conciliation, and even that has its border line. It remains

true, however, that reason applied should be superior to force and triumph over it. We are now to try union on a larger scale, and there are nine years ahead to witness its results. That Conciliation Boards were expensive the following table (which goes to the end of 1912) will show:—

Railway.	1906 to 1910.	1911.	1912.	Seven years total.
	£	£	£	£
Alexandra Railway and Dock (Newport)	37	19	32	88
Barry	324	128	75	527
Belfast and County Down	21	1	—	22
Brecon and Merthyr	61	16	33	110
Burton and Ashby	—	—	2	2
Cardiff	101	37	79	217
Cambrian	75	19	62	156
Caledonian	1656	93	187	1936
Cheshire Lines	126	25	148	299
Cork and Bandon	82	5	13	100
District (London)	16	—	—	16
Dublin and South-Eastern	82	14	13	109
Furness	86	17	51	154
Great Eastern	1679	176	117	1972
Great Northern	2474	136	345	2955
Great Western	3143	529	890	4562
Great Central	558	308	380	1246
Great Central and L. & N. W. Joint	—	—	3	3
Great Western and L. & N. W. Joint	20	27	57	104
Great Northern and City	97	—	11	108
Great North of Scotland	62	12	32	106
Great Northern of Ireland	180	848	—	1028
Great Southern and Western (Ireland)	470	138	8	616
Glasgow and S. Western	53	22	95	170
G. B. and K. Joint (Scotland)	5	2	12	19
Highland	51	1	56	108
Hull and Barnsley	8	9	36	53
Isle of Wight Railways	—	—	3	3
L. & N. W.	2344	595	837	3776
L. B. & S. C.	302	88	115	505
L. & S. W.	230	69	111	410
London, Tilbury and Southend	45	21	27	93
Lancashire and Yorkshire	990	680	336	2006
Liverpool Overhead	—	—	1	1
London Underground Electric	5	17	29	51
Midland	3605	624	971	5200
Midland G. W. of Ireland	166	7	15	188
Metropolitan	66	1	67	134
Manchester Ship Canal Railways	—	25	6	31
Midland and G. N. Joint	94	23	28	145
Mersey	—	—	10	10
Maryport and Carlisle	44	22	47	113
North-Eastern	3100	766	827	4693
North British	1848	122	323	2293
North Stafford	335	38	83	456
North London	1	1	—	2
Neath and Brecon	3	—	12	15
Port Talbot Railway and Docks	8	3	29	40
Rhondda and Swansea Bay	43	21	70	134
Rhymney	146	32	87	265
South-Eastern and Chatham	291	87	175	553
Somerset and Dorset	20	16	81	117
Taff Vale	144	32	89	265
Wirral	—	—	17	17
West Clare	9	—	—	9
Cork and Macroom (Ireland)	4	—	—	4
	25310	5872	7133	38315

When the strike of 1911 had been settled the men on the Midland contended that the officials of that company had violated the agreement in letter and in spirit; and these cases were taken up with the Midland. But satisfaction could not be obtained, and in order to elucidate the facts the Board of Trade set up an inquiry before J. R. Atkin, King's Counsel, which was held at Winchester House, St. James' Square, and lasted four days. To an ordinary unbiased reader of the 300 pages of the evidence the case was completely made out. Men who struck had written in red ink against their names "This man struck," and in skilful cross-examination of one witness by J. H. Thomas, who was asked why this was, he replied that he did not know. My friend the unbiased reader would think something else. It is not possible to quote this lengthy document and deal with it witness by witness and show the clear case they made out. They included several grades. Promotion was given to men who had failed and to those junior in service. This was against custom. Unfortunately for the company it had struck at some very competent men. To cite only one case, and this of a well-known man—H. C. Charleton, of Kentish Town. He was a master of his craft; not only that, but a diligent student, and knew every part of an engine as a bricklayer knows his trowel. He had mentally equipped himself; nor were his studies confined to his work. Collateral studies carried him into other spheres; and his library is more than a bookshelf, and shows that he knows a good book when he sees one. All his private hours are given to mental improvement. The present writer has met him *en route* when travelling with the inevitable book under his arm or in his pocket, and has profited by his wider knowledge. He was no mere dilettante, but knew each phase of art, of craft, to which he made pretensions; was sure of his knowledge and skilful in his use of it. He had made himself proficient by studies at the British Museum, and lectured to men on locomotives. He was every inch a man; thrifty, careful, and studious. Mr. J. H. Thomas said of him: "Bro. Charleton worked with me for years. He is a man who has never hesitated to disagree, to differ, to argue, and to defend his case when he felt he was right. He has never been one who, when a decision was given, allowed any personal recriminations to interfere with him. A man clean in character, a fine, true workman—in fact, a man who, in my judgment, holds the greatest tribute of honour that can be held. You all remember the famous inquiry that followed the difficulties in 1911 when we were charging the Midland Railway Company on a question of victimisation. I was conducting that inquiry, and on putting Charleton into the witness-box, I started to cross-examine him on his record, when the representative of the company got up and said: 'We do not want one word said about that. We are prepared ourselves to say that no words that can be said are too high to give to Mr. Charleton the tribute he deserves as a workman.' In addition to all that, Charleton is a man of ability and character. He came from the ranks of the workers; he is in the ranks to-day." So here was not a wastrel that they had to deal with, who was late at work, careless

in duties or rebellious against authority. Reading his evidence from the cold facts presented and far enough away from them to be influenced by passion, they seem to be damning to the Midland in every line and every word. The cross-examination of Mr. Thomas was keen, and he knew the fact he wanted and elicited it. Among the many documents I have waded through, often with weariness, here at this distant time is all the setting of a drama, and shows truth to be stranger than fiction. It also multiplies the facts, which goes to show the unwearied and unceasing vigil the society showed in all its affairs; how that no real point is missed; that every fact is noted, that every effort is made as the watch-dog of Labour, showing unrivalled skill, and it makes one feel proud that he has, as a member, a part in these heritages of deeds; and looking backward or forward we can say "the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places. Yea, we have a goodly heritage." New methods and old now mingle, despair is chased out of our records, men are alert, eager, hopeful, and stubborn despair is slain, and the beckoning hand points onward and upward. Our organising world is moving, and moving onward. Fear has gone and action has come. Dread for authority has gone, and authority has greater recognition because of it; it is seen not as an instrument of evil, but a directing force. A new spirit has leapt into life, infusing itself into everything; a guiding, correcting, controlling force. "The day breaks and the shadows flee away." The comment on the report is one word—"whitewash."

Here we cull a few sentences from our own organ because they express the sentiment then and now: "The A.S.R.S. can look back upon a history of which any union may be proud. Its actual and solid achievements are many. The reforms which it has secured are many and great. The assistance it has rendered to its members is on record; but no imagination can translate the figures into living and palpable existence. They form a veritable galaxy of individual experience which it is not possible to visualise." I have, along the records that I have examined, seen the dead, cold figures, as they seemed on the page, but translated into actual facts they breathe with life, fact, and beauty; and often have I said: "Could the central facts be thrown upon the page, what history is here!"

Turn we now to an individual experience, which is bound up in a system; the efforts made to right a wrong, and the crowning triumph—Guard Richardson. The trouble arose in this way. Owing to the heavy gradient between Sheffield and Chesterfield, the Midland Company in the appendix to the working time-table laid it down very clearly that trains between Sheffield and Chesterfield, in either direction, must in all cases be provided with a fifteen or twenty-ton brake for No. 3 class of goods. The foreman at Chesterfield told him he would have to take the full loading with a ten-ton brake. Richardson, with a sense of duty, declined to contravene the regulations, because by so doing he would be endangering not only his own life, but his mates and public safety. For this he received notice of dismissal. Before me is the whole of the

correspondence, supplied by Bro. Green, and in all the cases that have come before me I have seen no case in which the matter was so well managed : every action was taken with due regard to custom and the facts of the case. It is a veritable triumph of good sense and careful action, and the only regret is that they cannot be given in full. It is really a matter for a little book of its own. The resolution that concluded the proceedings of the Joint E.C. is in the light of all the facts the tamest on record: "This Joint E.C. appreciate and congratulate Guard Richardson and our members in all parts of the country upon his and their loyalty to their respective organisations during this crisis, which has enabled this Joint Executive to successfully conduct their negotiations, and urge them to continue to strengthen their organisations and be prepared, if necessary, to meet any future emergency." One feels that they have a grievance against both the draughtsman and the body that passed it, because the correspondence is "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever." My overlaid page must, however, have the salient facts. He declined, as above, to break regulations.

The following is a substantial extract from Mr. Williams' report on the subject to the Joint E.C.'s and reproduces most of the correspondence:—

" For this he was reported, and on January 22nd he had to appear before Mr. Owen, of Derby, in connection with the matter. That gentleman told him he ought to have done as instructed, even if the instruction had been to take his train on the wrong line, and take no notice of what was stated in the appendix in regard to the loading of trains. Mr. Owen then informed him that he would be given 14 days' notice to leave the service of the company.

"He appealed to the general manager against his dismissal, and asked for an interview, and also that he might be accompanied at the interview by two of his fellow workers. He was granted an interview on February 7th, but the general manager declined his request to be accompanied by two of his fellow workers.

"The general manager told him he should have done as he was told, and upheld Mr. Owen's decision. Richardson then appealed to the directors for an interview, again asking to be allowed to be accompanied by two of his fellow workers. They granted him an interview on February 21st, but they also refused his request to be accompanied by two of his fellow workers.

"Richardson stated his case, and then left the room whilst the directors discussed the matter. On returning to the room, the chairman told him they had decided to uphold the decision of the general manager. The chairman also told him that if he had taken the additional wagons, and a mishap had occurred, the inspector would have been held responsible for overloading the train. He further stated that the regulations in the appendix were only of secondary consideration so far as traffic working was concerned, and they could be departed from on the instructions of foremen.

"Richardson had been in the company's service for about 21 years. His notice expired on February 5th.

"The full facts of the case have been placed before the President of the Board of Trade.

“ On February 3rd Mr. J. H. Thomas asked the President of the Board of Trade :—

“ ‘ Whether he is aware that a goods guard named Richardson, employed by the Midland Company at Normanton, has been dismissed from his employment for refusing to take more wagons on his train than is allowed in the company’s printed rules and appendices, that Richardson’s refusal to disregard the company’s printed instructions was in consequence of his being satisfied that to do so would endanger his and other railwaymen’s lives and also the travelling public, and that, on his appeal to the chief official at Derby, Mr. Owen, he was told that he must do what he was told even if it was to take his train on the wrong line; and whether, having regard to the seriousness of such instructions, the dangers to the travelling public, and the uncertainty which exists amongst the men as to what their duties are, he will cause an immediate inquiry to be made with a view of preventing what may result in loss of life.’

“ The President of the Board of Trade replied :—

“ ‘ I cannot enter into a question of discipline, but if my hon. friend alleges that an excessive number of wagons was attached to the train in question, and will furnish me with particulars, I will consider whether I can usefully communicate with the company.’

“ COPIES OF CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE BOARD OF TRADE.

“ DISMISSAL OF GOODS GUARD RICHARDSON, MIDLAND RAILWAY.

“ ‘ The Right Hon. Sydney Buxton, P.C., M.P., President of the Board of Trade, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.

“ ‘ February 10th, 1913.

“ ‘ DEAR SIR,—Adverting to the dismissal of Goods Guard Richardson, of Normanton, you will doubtless remember that Mr. J. H. Thomas, M.P., put a question to you regarding this man’s dismissal on the 3rd inst., when you desired to have further particulars. The following is a copy of the instruction referred to in Mr. Thomas’s question, and is taken from the appendix to the company’s rules and regulations, dated June, 1911, No. 24, page 499 :—

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ Through trains between Sheffield and Chesterfield via Dronfield in either direction not booked for traffic purposes at any intermediate station or siding, and not exceeding the No. 2 class goods engine loading, require one ten-ton brake only. Trains having to stop at Queen’s Road and Heeley only, and not exceeding the No. 2 class goods engine loading, require one ten-ton brake only. Trains between Sheffield and Chesterfield via Dronfield in either direction conveying No. 2 class goods engine loading, must in all cases be provided with a fifteen or twenty-ton brake. No. 2 class engine, thirty-six goods and

considers he has not received fair treatment. He appeared before the general manager on the 7th inst. He also told him that he should have done as he was instructed to do, and upheld Mr. Owen's decision to dismiss him. So that there shall be no possibility of complaint regarding procedure, I have advised Richardson to make application for an interview with the board of directors, and as his application to be accompanied by two of his fellow workers at his interview with the general manager was refused, to state in his application that he is desirous of someone accompanying him when he interviews the board of directors.

" My object in writing you so fully is because of the serious view the Midland men are taking of these dismissals, and I may, in confidence, assure you that the feeling of the men is getting so strong that it will be quite impossible to prevent them from taking what they consider the only means at their disposal to put a stop to the unjust punishment they are subjected to. I, therefore, most strongly appeal to you to take action with the Midland Company at once.

" ' Recognising the urgent importance of this matter, I am sending this letter by hand so as to save delay.

" ' I am, sir, yours faithfully,

" ' (Signed) J. E. WILLIAMS.'

" ' Board of Trade, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,

" ' February 15th, 1913.

" ' DEAR SIR,—With reference to your letter of the 10th February respecting the circumstances attending the dismissal of Goods Guard Richardson from the service of the Midland Railway Company, I am desired by Mr. Buxton to say that it appears to him from the contents of your letter that the case is one involving considerations of discipline, and not one in which the Board of Trade can intervene unless they are supplied with full information showing that the number of wagons which would have been attached to the train in question, had the instructions given been carried out, would have constituted a source of danger.

" ' I am to add that the extract from the Midland Railway Company's rules and regulations contained in your letter would appear not to relate to the section of line affected.

" ' Yours faithfully,

" ' (Signed) J. A. WEBSTER.

" ' J. E. Williams, Esq.'

" ' Unity House, Euston Road, London, N.W.,

" ' February 19th, 1913.

" ' The Right Hon. Sydney Buxton, P.C., M.P., President of the Board of Trade, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.

" ' DEAR SIR,—I am in receipt of your letter of the 15th instant hereon and note the contents. In reply, I desire to say that,

in my opinion, there is ample evidence to show that, had further wagons been attached to the train in question it would have been a dangerous procedure.

“ ‘ Richardson, when attending his train at Nottingham, noticed that it was only provided with a ten-ton brake, and, as he knew that wagons had, as a rule, to be attached at Chesterfield, for which purpose a heavier brake was usually provided, he called the attention of the foreman to the fact that the brake was one of ten tons only, and the foreman replied that it was the only brake he had for him. On arrival at Chesterfield his train was composed of forty wagons, viz., twenty-nine loaded and eleven empties, equal to thirty-six loaded, and this number is the limit allowed by the appendix of June, 1911, under which the men at present work as far as this particular train is concerned. The inspector at Chesterfield requested him to take on seven more wagons, but Richardson pointed out that if he did so he would be exceeding the load allowed by the regulations, and he therefore declined. The inspector said “ Never mind the brake power,” but Richardson replied that the appendix was there for him to work to.

“ ‘ Richardson never expected to hear anything further on the matter because he and others had on several occasions declined to overload their trains at other places and had heard nothing further of it. At the interview Richardson had with Mr. Owen, superintendent of operations, Midland Railway; on Mr. Owen saying that Richardson had violated his instructions through the inspector and must be dismissed, Richardson, who knew of no such instructions having been given, asked when they were given and why they were not published in the supplementary appendix issued on January 6th, 1913. Mr. Owen replied that Richardson was there to answer for something he had not done, and not to ask questions. If Richardson had taken on more wagons, as requested by the inspector, it would have been dangerous, as is proved by the fact that between Chesterfield and Dronfield, the next section of the line through which the train would have to travel, there are no less than four sets of catch points, viz., at Tapton Junction, Unstone Sidings, Dronfield Signal-Box, and Dronfield Colliery, and, further, the gradient is a rising one of 1 in 100 to Unstone Siding, 1 in 201 to Dronfield, and 1 in 102 to Dronfield Colliery. Richardson is a guard with long experience, and, having regard to the natural resentment felt throughout the Midland system at the punishment he has received for observing the company's rules and regulations, I have had him here, and after a very full inquiry into everything which transpired, I cannot agree with your suggestion that it is a matter involving questions of discipline. I am absolutely convinced that his only object in declining to take more wagons was because he honestly felt that to do so would be dangerous to himself, his fellow workers, and to the travelling public, and, further, that in the event of any accident occurring,

the Board of Trade would, as in previous cases, blame him for disregarding the company's printed rules and regulations, a precaution with which I am in full agreement. I desire to correct the statement in my last letter that the train was travelling from Normanton to Nottingham. I should have said that the train was travelling from Nottingham to Normanton, and you will thus see that the appendix quotation given in my last letter is applicable to this case.

“ ‘ I trust that in view of this additional information you will at once communicate with the railway company with a view to Richardson's request for an interview with the directors, along with two fellow workmen, being granted, and that you will use your good offices to get Richardson reinstated, as I am quite convinced that this action on the part of Richardson—a perfectly legitimate one under the circumstances—does not entitle the company to dismiss him, and, as stated in my previous letter, I feel satisfied that Richardson has been penalised, and that Clause 2 of the settlement of 1911 has been violated.

“ ‘ Yours faithfully,

“ ‘ (Signed) J. E. WILLIAMS.’

“ ‘ Unity House, Euston Road, London, N.W.,

“ ‘ February 25th, 1913.

“ ‘ DEAR SIR,—You will no doubt have observed from the public Press the very keen feeling of resentment which exists amongst railwaymen, not only on the Midland, but on all other railways, at the action of the directors of the Midland Railway in confirming the dismissal of Richardson for carrying out the company's regulations as printed in the appendix.

“ ‘ I have this morning received a very large number indeed of demands from practically the whole of the large centres for immediate action to be taken to ensure justice to Richardson, and also requesting the withdrawal of the regulations in the appendix, seeing that the chairman of the board of directors of the Midland Company has publicly stated that they are not to be worked to.

“ ‘ I desire to again draw your attention to the fact that in all cases where accidents have happened your inspecting officers in their reports have severely censured railwaymen where there has been any non-observance of the rules and regulations for the working of traffic. In this connection I also wish to point out that in January, 1907, this society deemed it necessary to issue a circular to the whole of its members drawing particular attention to the necessity for the strict observance of rules and regulations owing to the many instances which had occurred where the inspecting officers of the Board of Trade had specifically complained of the lack of observance of printed rules and regulations, and attributed the accidents to that cause.

“ ‘ I would here remind the Board that the Act for the Better Regulation of Railways of 1842, Section 17, makes it an offence against the law, with a heavy penalty, for any negligence on the part of a railway employé to carry out the regulations laid down for the safe working of traffic, and at the present moment a man stands charged with manslaughter for not having carried out the company's rules in connection with the recent accident on the Midland Railway at Bromford Bridge on January 13th last. Since that Act was passed other Acts have been passed providing for the safety of the public and railway employés, notably the Railway Regulations (Hours) Act of 1893 and the Railway Employment (Prevention of Accidents) Act of 1900. In these Acts provisions are made which place a responsibility upon the Board of Trade for seeing that the terms of these Acts are complied with, and in view of this I feel sure you will agree with me that this society is not asking too much from the Board of Trade in the request I have made for your assistance in seeing that justice is done to Richardson, who, after all, has simply complied with the specific regulations made by the company for the safe working of traffic. I can assure you that if the assistance asked for from your Department is not forthcoming it will be very difficult indeed for this society to decline to respond to the urgent requests now being made by the men generally for such steps to be taken as will lead to the withdrawal of the regulations in the appendix, which, as I have before pointed out, the chairman of the directors of the Midland Railway Company has stated are of secondary consideration and are not intended to be strictly adhered to.

“ ‘ I am, sir, yours faithfully,

“ ‘ (Signed) J. E. WILLIAMS.

“ ‘ The Right Hon. Sydney Buxton, P.C., M.P., President of the Board of Trade, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.’

“ ‘ Board of Trade, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.,

“ ‘ February 26th, 1913.

“ ‘ DEAR SIR,—In reply to your letter of the 19th February on the subject of the circumstances attending the dismissal of Goods Guard Richardson on the Midland Railway, I am desired by Mr. Buxton to state that he has drawn the attention of the railway company to the statements made with regard to the loading of the train and the requirement to add additional wagons at Chesterfield. I am, however, to say that your suggestion that Richardson's request for an interview with the directors of the company, along with two fellow workmen, should be supported by Mr. Buxton, appears to be founded on a misapprehension of clause 72 of the Report of the Royal Commission on the Railway Conciliation Scheme, quoted in your letter of the 10th February. That clause recommends that men charged with misconduct, etc., should be permitted to state their defence, to call witnesses, and to advance

any extenuating circumstances prior to a final decision being arrived at, but there is no recommendation that a man should be accompanied, on an appeal to the directors, by two of his fellow workmen, apart from any witnesses he may desire to call.

“ ‘Mr. Buxton notes that, in the concluding paragraph of your letter, you suggest that this case constitutes a breach of clause 2 of the settlement of August 19th, 1911, but he desires me to point out that this was not suggested in your previous letter, nor is it now made clear in what way Richardson’s dismissal is supposed to be connected with the strike closed by the settlement referred to.

“ ‘Yours faithfully,

“ ‘(Signed) W. F. MARWOOD.

“ ‘This letter was written prior to the receipt of your letter of February 25th, which is under consideration.

“ ‘J. E. Williams, Esq.’ ”

The Joint Executives met at Unity House on March 5th, at 2 p.m., and endorsed all actions.

“ Moved by Cramp and Clarken : ‘ That this Joint Executive Committee, representing the A.S.R.S., the A.S.L.E. & F., the G.R.W.U., and the U.P.S.S., having carefully considered the whole of the circumstances in connection with the dismissal of Guard Richardson by the Midland Railway Company for his refusal to break an important rule in the company’s appendix upon the verbal authority of a foreman, express our strong indignation at such action, and, having regard to the definite instructions that railwaymen should observe the printed rules and regulations of the companies issued for their guidance and the safety of the travelling public, we recognise that if men are to be liable to penalisation for actions of this kind no railwayman will be secure in the pursuit of his calling in the future, and will create a serious menace to the safety of the travelling public.

“ ‘We, therefore, resolve to insist upon the reinstatement of Richardson, together with an undertaking that when men are asked to vary any printed rule or instructions written authority shall be given to the employés so requested.

“ ‘We hereby decide that a copy of this decision be sent to the Midland Railway Company asking for an immediate reply.’ ”

The resolution was forwarded to Mr. G. Murray Smith, chairman of the company, telling him the Joint E.C. was waiting a reply, and was signed by Messrs. J. E. Williams (General Secretary, A.S.R.S.), Albert Fox (General Secretary, A.S.L.E. & F.), T. Lowth (General Secretary, G.R.W.U.), and S. Chorlton (General Secretary, U.P.S.S.), and a copy of it was forwarded to the President of the Board of Trade signed by all four as before.

The following explains itself :—

“ Moved by Cramp and Clarken : ‘ That this Joint Executive, having considered the communications from Normanton with respect to Guard Richardson’s case stating that he has received an offer of unconditional

reinstatement, reaffirm our decision of Wednesday last, viz., that before there can be a settlement of this matter we must have, together with the reinstatement of Richardson, an undertaking that if men are to be asked to vary any printed rule or instructions written authority shall be given to the employé so requested. We, however, decide that, provided Guard Richardson can obtain written authority duly signed by a representative of the company containing the offer made to him, he should immediately accept such reinstatement. We further decide to meet to-morrow at 10 a.m to consider any reply that may be received from the Midland Company to our communication of Wednesday last.' ”

“ Amendment by Dobbie and Kelly : ‘ That in view of the resolution passed by the Joint E.C. on Wednesday, in which we ask as a condition of reinstatement that certain conditions regarding printed orders be agreed to by the Midland Company, we ask Richardson not to accept the offer of reinstatement until a reply has been received from the Midland Company and considered by the Joint Committee, and to await instructions from Mr. Williams.’ ”

“ Resolution carried.

“ COPY OF MIDLAND COMPANY’S REPLY.

“ ‘ Midland Railway, Secretary’s Office, Derby,

“ ‘ March 7th, 1913.

“ ‘ DEAR SIR,—I am instructed to send you herewith copy of a communication which my board are issuing to the Press to-day.

“ Yours faithfully,

“ ‘ (Signed) A. L. CHARLES, Secretary.

“ ‘ The Secretary, Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, Unity House, Euston Road, N.W.’ ”

“ Midland Railway Company,

“ March 7th, 1913.

“ The directors of the Midland Railway Company at their meeting at Derby to-day had under consideration matters arising out of the case of Guard Richardson.

“ In their view the position has changed in two respects since Richardson was given notice to leave the service.

“ In the first place, his statements which have appeared in the Press and which were repeated yesterday to one of the company’s officials, have now made it clear that he had no intention to wilfully disobey the orders of his superior officers and that there should be no difficulty in his working loyally for the company in future. The directors have, therefore, confirmed the offer of reinstatement made to Richardson yesterday by their official.

“ In the second place, the directors recognise that the discussion has shown that it is possible under the present regulations and working practice for an employé to fear that he may suffer injustice if an oral instruction which has been given to him and which is in conflict with a printed instruction is subsequently denied.

“The directors are desirous that any such possibility should be removed, and have given instructions that the form of the appendix to the working time-table shall be carefully considered and revised with a view to meeting this point.

“Moved by Ellison and Clarken: ‘This Joint Committee, having received and considered the reply of the directors of the Midland Railway Company to our communication of March 5th, note with satisfaction that the two points submitted by us have been conceded, namely:—

“(1) The reinstatement of Guard Richardson, and

“(2) an intimation that in future the difficulty of men accepting oral instructions which are contrary to the printed rules and regulations of the company will be altered in such a manner that will clearly define the men’s position in such circumstances.

“We, therefore, decide to accept this reply and await the contemplated alterations, as proposed by the Midland directors, in the hope that such alterations will, as the directors assure us, obviate any future difficulties such as that experienced by Guard Richardson.

“We also desire to express the hope that in future more amicable relations will prevail between the Midland Railway Company and their employes than those which have existed for some time past, thus avoiding any danger or possibility of their being brought into conflict and creating contingencies of this kind prejudicial to the convenience and safety of the public at large.’”

This was duly sent to the Midland Railway signed by four Secretaries.

The two following resolutions were carried by acclamation:—

“Moved by Clarken and Billet: ‘Arising out of the controversy over Guard Richardson and the numerous complaints submitted to this Joint E.C. of difficulties experienced by railwaymen in all parts of the country in connection with the safe working of both goods and passenger trains, and appreciating the serious menace both to our men and to the travelling public which is likely to arise through such loose working, which we believe can be considerably obviated if the Board of Trade exercised the power and authority given to them by the Railway Employment (Prevention of Accidents) Act of 1900 and the Prevention of Accidents Rules issued by them. We consider that full advantage has not been taken by that Department of those powers, and are also of opinion that it is imperative for the safe working of our railways that such powers above mentioned should be fully and rigidly enforced, and request the Board of Trade to immediately consider this resolution.’

“Moved by Clarken and Billett: ‘That the deputation comprise the four General Secretaries, the four Presidents, accompanied by Mr. J. H. Thomas, M.P., to attend the offices of the Board of Trade.’

" COPY OF LETTER TO BOARD OF TRADE.

" " The Right Hon. Sydney Buxton, P.C., M.P., President of the Board of Trade, Whitehall Gardens, London, S.W.

" " DEAR SIR,—The enclosed resolution was unanimously adopted at a joint meeting of the E.C.'s of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, the General Railway Workers' Union, and the United Pointsmen and Signalmen's Society, held at the above address to-day, and I am instructed to forward same to you, with a request that you will kindly arrange to receive a deputation composed of Messrs. A. Bellamy, J.P., G. Wride, Dobbie, and Fitzgerald, the four Presidents of the respective societies, and the four Secretaries of the societies, together with Mr. J. H. Thomas, M.P., for the purpose of more fully emphasising the importance of the matters contained in the resolution.

" " I shall be exceedingly glad to know that you will receive the deputation at your earliest convenience, and I shall also be pleased if you will give me a day or two's notice in advance, so that I may arrange for the attendance of those comprising the deputation.

" " I have the honour to be,

" " On behalf of the Joint Executive,

" " Yours faithfully,

" " (Signed) J. E. WILLIAMS.'

" COPY OF LETTER FROM MIDLAND RAILWAY COMPANY OFFERING RICHARDSON REINSTATEMENT.

" " Traffic Department, Normanton.

" " March 8th, 1913.

" " DEAR SIR,—The directors of the Midland Railway Company at their meeting on the 7th instant decided to confirm the offer made to you on Thursday last by Mr. Follows, and have instructed me to reinstate you in the service.

" " You can present yourself for duty at Normanton on Monday, 10th instant, at 11-20 a.m. if this does not interfere with your present employment.

" " (Signed) G. T. WARD.

" " Mr. H. Richardson.' "

It was a splendid victory. Here we had, perhaps more than any time in our history, a good Press voice. Day by day, as the need was, the "Daily Citizen" gave all the facts, nothing extenuating, and the public service rendered by the workmen's paper was copied by others, which shows in an excellent form the value of a reliable Labour Press. We had put £12,500 into the paper, and had the other unions done the same, or have advanced a better proportion, it might have survived even the war period, a trying time for all Labour papers, the great part

of which were subsidised, the "Railway Review" being the one exception, but even that paper had to draw upon its reserves. It survived, however, and will have a Jubilee for certain on July 16th, 1930.

Expulsion from the society came but rarely, and the rule relating to it was exercised with diffidence and care. A request was made by Mr. F. J. Passmore, and another man named Brooks, and they had an interview with the Motor 'Busmen's Executive, in order to fuse a section of our members with that body on the plea that they were unable to obtain the redress of their grievances in the N.U.R. The charges were preferred against them. Brooks did not reply, and at the next E.C. meeting they were expelled.

Unauthorised movements and sympathetic strikes during 1913 gave the E.C. considerable trouble, Dublin, Liverpool, and Birmingham being among them. The old resolutions were again passed, and the cleaners at Carlisle struck work, but the matter was adjusted. South Wales had also a dispute over Driver James, who was dismissed. Mr. J. H. Thomas went down and turned the tables on the malcontents.

A question during the year arose which involved that blessed word "discipline." Driver Chappell, a member of the Doncaster Branch, worked a train from Doncaster to Leeds, and, returning with another train, he was relieved at Nostell, fourteen and a-half miles from Doncaster at 10-13 a.m., and, as there was no passenger train available until the express due to leave Hemsworth, a station two and three-quarter miles near Doncaster, at 11-59, he travelled in the guard's brake of the train he had been working, a delay to which occurring, he was overtaken by the express, which prolonged his duty one hour fifty minutes, and he was accused of wasting time. He applied for the punishment to be postponed pending further inquiry, but it was contended that the question was one of discipline and did not come under the Conciliation Scheme, which if so came under Clause 72, and they wished to punish him instead of foregoing the time. It must have been amazing ignorance on their part, or they thought he would take it lying down. The company had to accept the inevitable, and he was reinstated.

The funds of the union kept mounting up, but for some years the note in the Annual Report was that regard must be had to the liabilities of the union, a needful thing, to be seen more especially in the years which are yet ahead.

Early in 1914 the N.U.R. gave notice to terminate the Conciliation Scheme. The Great Eastern alone, through the Associated coalescing with the non-union element, gave notice only of revision. Not having heard anything, Mr. Williams wrote to all the companies in the following strain:—

" RAILWAY CONCILIATION SCHEME.

" 19th February, 1914.

" DEAR SIR,—Referring to the formal notice given by the men's side of the Conciliation Boards on your company's system to determine the agreement of December, 1911, possibly the position of the

men was not made clear to you when the notice was submitted, and I therefore write to explain that the men's side of your company's Boards, and of all the Boards in the country, have decided that their Trade Union officials, with whom the agreement of 1911 was settled at the Board of Trade, shall again negotiate with the railway companies with a view of securing the amendment of the scheme, for which purpose the formal notice to determine the scheme was given. A similar letter to this has been addressed to all companies, and I shall be glad to hear as early as possible that the representatives of the railway companies will meet the representatives of the union for this purpose.

“Yours faithfully,
“J. E. WILLIAMS.”

Mr. Sam Fay replied:—

“RAILWAY CONCILIATION SCHEME.

“March 3rd, 1914.

“J. E. Williams, Esq.

“DEAR SIR,—With further reference to your letter of the 19th ult., I shall be glad to have a meeting with officials of your union, in conjunction with the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, who were signatories to the agreement of 1911.

“For the purpose of dealing with the question a committee of seven general managers of the companies has been appointed, and at the first meeting it will be desirable that the amendments you desire in the scheme should be announced in full detail.

“I should be glad to hear that the officials of the two unions will confer together and advise the companies as to the approximate date when they will be ready to place their amendments before the committee.

“Yours faithfully,
“(Signed) SAM FAY.”

The N.U.R. asked the Associated to meet them at Unity House on March 10th, which they did, as the two Executives. Mr. Williams being ill, all the business aspect of it fell upon Mr. Thomas. The Associated had sent the following letter:—

“Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen,
“8, Park Square, Leeds,
“November 6th, 1913.

“RE DURATION OF RAILWAYS CONCILIATION SCHEME, 1911.

“DEAR SIR,—My members have given careful consideration to the question of the duration of the settlement of December 11th, 1911, to which they were parties, whereby they accepted the recommendation of the Royal Commission after consultation and agreement with the representatives of the railway companies.

“After reviewing the working of the scheme, they are prepared to agree to its continuance with slight modifications.

“ The following qualifications, which they have decided are necessary improvements, were adopted at a representative conference of our members, representing between 30,000 and 31,000 engine drivers, firemen, locomotive cleaners, and motormen on September 29th last. At their instruction I am forwarding the same to you, trusting that the suggestion will be acceptable to you, and that you will be able to meet the accredited representatives of the men to discuss the same at an early date :—

“ 1. That a fuller recognition shall be given to the representatives of the Trade Unions.

“ 2. That all matters affecting the contractual relations between the company and its employés shall come within the scope of the Conciliation Boards.

“ 3. That a Conciliation Board shall be established on all railways for engine drivers, firemen, locomotive cleaners, and motormen distinct and apart from all other grades.

“ 4. That vacancies shall be filled by election at any time other than six months before re-election.

“ 5. That Sectional Boards, by twelve months' notice, to have power to determine the scheme.

“ 6. That an effort be made to bring about a similar scheme for the Irish locomotivemen.

“ I am instructed to inform you that, in the opinion of our members, the most effective settlement for the locomotivemen and motormen would be reached by a meeting of representatives of the whole of the railway companies and my Executive Committee.

“ I should be pleased to arrange for the attendance of my Committee at such a conference for the discussion of these suggested modifications to the scheme as contained herein if the companies would agree to the same taking place.

“ Thanking you in anticipation of a favourable reply,

“ I am, sir, yours faithfully,

“ A. Fox.”

Mr. Clower, of the Midland, replied to this in almost the same terms as Sam Fay used in his reply, and stated that they should meet the representatives of the two unions, and that seven managers had been appointed to meet them. He also told them that—

“ . . . it would be necessary at the suggested conference to have the men's proposals with regard to the amendments to the Conciliation Scheme produced, and I am to suggest that with this object you should confer with the officials of the National Union of Railwaymen and afterwards let me know the approximate date when you would be prepared to place your proposals before the Committee of General Managers. A mutually convenient date for a meeting can then, no doubt, be selected.”

Here was a proposal for recognition. The two sides debated in page after page of printed matter whether the invitation should be accepted as a first part of the proceedings or whether they should first formulate what they wished to put before the companies' representatives when they met—if they did. Thomas emphasised the fact that we ought first to agree to meet them; and that now recognition was in their grasp they should clutch at it. He said:—

“For the first time in the history of railwaymen we have, without either bringing pressure to bear or a threat of a stoppage or anything else, a frank, free invitation, not in a backdoor way, but officially communicated to us as Trade Unions, that the railway companies are prepared to meet us. Bear in mind they are not meeting us out of any personal consideration for either of the E.C.'s or for the officers of the societies. Let us clearly keep that in our minds. They are meeting us because of the commonsense of the men, who have determined to become better organised, and because of the strenuous combination that they have to face to-day. That being so, I submit that we ought to treat the letter from the companies in the spirit in which we have acted all through our claims for recognition—that is to say, in a spirit of feeling ourselves capable and competent of being prepared to deal with a commercial concern on commercial and business lines. Surely the first step towards that is to say, ‘Yes, we will accept the invitation you have given to us. We will accept it, because it is what we have been fighting for all along.’ But when we talk of the railwaymen of the country what impression will be created amongst them if we do not act in that businesslike way? If it should go forth that the only condition under which you will meet the railway companies will be that of one side or the other getting its own way, a very bad impression will be produced. The very fact of a delay in the acceptance of the invitation pre-supposes a fear that you will not be able to agree. I hold that this should not be the spirit in which we approach this matter. Let me tell you the true spirit in which this matter should be approached at the present juncture. We should regard this as a red-letter day in the history of railwaymen—as the day in which we have achieved that recognition for which we have been so long fighting. We ought to approach this matter with the single-minded desire that, whatever personal differences may exist, the interests of the rank and file of our members throughout the country must be considered and regarded as paramount. We should approach the matter in a spirit in which we can sink all differences. The commonsense of the whole should settle all differences; but if, on the other hand, you start off by saying, ‘We may disagree,’ or ‘We may break with you, unless we get our way’—I am speaking of the other side—and if you say, ‘As you will not agree with us we will not meet the companies,’ then I say you will convey to the men outside, as well as to the companies, that what is governing you is not really the meeting with the companies, but the form in which you shall meet them. I am speaking of the two unions. Let us forget

the two unions; let us forget the N.U.R. or the Associated Society. Let us keep in mind that those for whom we appear here will hold us responsible if we fail them. On the other hand, I submit to you that to take the course that I suggest will show you free from prejudice and bias, and will give evidence to the world that on this occasion we are influenced by one controlling idea, namely, that of accepting recognition when it is offered us. Then, afterwards, if we do disagree on details, the commonsense of the Executives on both sides will be the determining factor. I say we should act on business lines—as commonsense men we ought to see how to deal with the situation in a commonsense way. I would urge you not to start differing at this stage, but to go on in an ordinary straightforward way, step by step and stage by stage, showing that we can in crises like this recognise our obligations to the full.”

The Associated had pledged themselves to a continuance of the scheme with certain amendments, whilst we had taken the safer course of getting what we wanted by giving notice of termination. Having received an intimation from them the year before that their Annual Conference had decided on amendment, Mr. Williams asked them what proposals they had in order to give effect to their resolution of continuance, and Mr. Fox telegraphed “Arrangements not yet complete.” The Conference waded through the lengthy correspondence with each body to the other; and Thomas asked them not boggle about what one or the other did—

“Let us forget that. Let us realise that by the force of circumstances we have driven the companies to at least offer a meeting. Do not let us at this point boggle over the question as to whether a mistake has been made. The letters, the evidence, every communication is the best answer as to whom the responsibility rests with. But we are prepared to forget it and to let the members judge the matter on its merits, and then go further and say that if a mistake has been made we will rectify it now in the interests of those we represent. Again I repeat, don't let us, after years of sacrifice, when many of our best men on both sides have been mowed down, when so much has been said for recognition, don't let us spoil the moral in a quibble as between one society or the other, but let us rise above these petty points and recognise that those that pay us expect that our personal dignity shall be second to their economic interest. If we keep that in mind I am sure that in spite of all differences we shall arrive at a decision in the interests of all concerned.”

The debates would seem to show that they were as anxious as we to meet the companies, but they had some diffidence in throwing over their own annual meeting resolution, and a further fear that to them the binding form might hinder unity of speech when we went before the companies' representatives. They eventually agreed to meet with us. But the conference took an extraordinary long time in deciding the numbers that should be from each union, and eventually decided that it should be six from ours and three from theirs.

It was also agreed that the deputation should negotiate and report to the Joint Committee before anything was decided, and, taking the condition of Ireland, that any scheme should apply to the United Kingdom, that the scheme should include all questions between employer and employed, and one chirped in with "Trade recognition, too." Mr. Thomas said: "We shall get it stage by stage." This speech by Mr. Thomas is worth reproducing as showing how far we had gone:—

"I put it to you that the next stage deals with petitions and deputations. You will remember that we were absolutely united, and, indeed, we felt very sore that in the twentieth century a body of Trade Unionists should be subject to that antiquated method of petitioning, and therefore we suggest that advantage should be taken of this opportunity to knock the petitioning entirely out, and, in addition, knock out the deputation stage as well, because you have had the same experience as we have where deputations have invariably queered the pitch, as it were. On the other hand, we ought to be sufficiently strong now to say that the old idea of a deputation to state the case ought to be abolished, and if the machinery that we set up is machinery suitable to us, giving us our representation, giving us an opportunity of electing our Trade Unionists, I put it to you that we ought to say that machinery shall be the machinery that will be used, and therefore that we ought at one fell stroke to say that all conditions of employment, whether it be discipline, or management, or anything else, shall be the work of the Board that we set up. Wipe away your deputation and your petitioning stage, and then you will always have the one body, and the one body only dealing with everything affecting the employer and employé. I think it would save time, it would save expense, it would save all the friction and annoyance of sending petitions round the country which our men resent, and it would show the railway companies that when we send a proposal to them we send it in the name of the men who are members of the organisation. Therefore I submit, Mr. President, that that ought to be the next stage in the proceedings, namely, that we will abolish the petition and deputation, and let the Conciliation Board have authority for dealing with the matter."

It was agreed that the deputation stage in respect to demands for reduction of hours, advance of wages, or conditions of service be eliminated, and that all questions should be dealt with direct between the Boards and the companies. The real difference came on the question of the Boards; the N.U.R. wanted a Composite Board and the Associated wanted a sectional one. The Associated overnight passed the following resolution: "That we cannot see our way clear to depart from the position taken up in reference to a separate Board for drivers, firemen, motormen, and cleaners only, and have full control in reference to that section. If the N.U.R. representatives think that any agreement can be come to later in reference to this question we are prepared to discuss the remaining items and revert to the question in dispute later." They retired for over an hour, and Mr. Wride came

back asking for a reply in writing, and Mr. Bellamy handed him the following :—

“That having carefully considered the final decision from the A.S.L.E. & F. that they are unable to entertain any proposal for the formation of a Composite Board, notwithstanding any safeguards we are prepared to make to ensure (1) election by departments; (2) representation by departments, and (3) power for grade matters to be considered by the departmental representatives, which would ensure every safeguard being given to particular interests, and at the same time guarantee the undivided support of all other grades, and so prevent advantage being taken of one section of men as against another, which, in our opinion, is not only the best and most suitable form of Board, but is in accord with the wishes of our members. We therefore regret, by the resolution above referred to, they have placed an obstacle in the way of meeting the railway companies in accordance with the companies' request, which, for the first time, accepted the principle of official recognition.”

Mr. Wride then left, and later in the day returned with the following document :—

“We are prepared to meet the Railway Companies' General Managers' Committee jointly in accordance with Mr. Clower's letter of March 3rd with the matter of the composition of the Boards unsettled. We shall be pleased to know that you can agree to this and consider the further points of the future scheme with us.”

The Joint Conference did not sit on Friday, March 13th, each side being occupied with the discussion of resolutions received from the other, but it resumed on the following day, with Mr. Bellamy again in the chair :—

“The Chairman: We are ready now, gentlemen. Perhaps it will be as well, so as to get the whole of the proceedings on the note, if I just give a brief *resumé* of what has transpired in the interim since last we met together as a Joint Conference. I think that when we adjourned last time it was for discussion of a resolution which was submitted to us from you by Mr. Wride, and which reads as follows :—

“‘That we cannot see our way clear to depart from the position taken up in reference to a separate board for drivers, firemen, motormen, and cleaners only, and have full control in reference to that section. If the N.U.R. representatives think any agreement can be come to later in reference to this question we are prepared to discuss the remaining items and revert to the question in dispute later.’

“To that resolution the following reply was sent :—

“‘That having carefully considered the final decision from the A.S.L.E. & F., that they are unable to entertain any proposal for the formation of a Composite Board, notwithstanding any safeguards we are prepared to make to ensure (1) election by departments, (2) representation by departments, (3) power for grade

matters to be considered by the departmental representatives, which would ensure every safeguard being given to particular interests, and at the same time guarantee the undivided support of all other grades and so prevent advantage being taken of one section of men as against another, which, in our opinion, is not only the best and most suitable form of Board, but is in accord with the wishes of our members. We therefore regret by the resolution above referred to they have placed an obstacle in the way of meeting the railway companies in accordance with the companies' request, which for the first time accepted the principle of official recognition.'

" Then we received from the Associated the following :—

" ' We are prepared to meet the Railway Companies' General Managers' Committee jointly, in accordance with Mr. Clower's letter of March 3rd, with the matter of the composition of the Boards unsettled. We shall be pleased to know that you can agree to this, and consider the points of the future scheme with us.'

" Then we sent the following :—

" ' Having considered the reply handed in by Mr. Wride to our previous decision, in which you state, " We are prepared to meet the Railway Companies' General Managers' Committee jointly, in accordance with Mr. Clower's letter of March 3rd, with the matter of the composition of the boards unsettled," we note that it is not intimated—and we would be pleased to know—what method it is proposed to adopt with regard to the unsettled point of " composition of Boards."

" ' We are of opinion that the method you suggest would exhibit to the employers a division which would be against the best interests of the members of both societies and railwaymen generally. We therefore suggest you further consider the whole question, and would point out that our last proposal would serve and safeguard the best interests of all concerned.'

" To this the Associated replied :—

" ' In reply to your communication, we regret that in communications you have not replied to the latter part of our first communication, i.e., " If the N.U.R. representatives think any agreement can be come to later in reference to this question, we are prepared to discuss the remaining items and revert to the question in dispute later." We respectfully suggest, in the interest of Trade Unionism and united action, that you should consider and reply to this. So far as our method before the Railway Companies' General Managers' Committee is concerned, we shall act in accordance with the requirements of Mr. Clower's letter of March 3rd, and would like to point out to you that by not complying with the request contained in that letter it would show a greater division than by meeting them with the point unsettled, as well as being an act of grave discourtesy to the General Managers' Committee, and submit to you that the reply as requested above may prevent a split in the ranks of railwaymen.'

“ The N.U.R. then sent the following answer :—

“ ‘ That having considered your reply to our communication, regret you have evaded the very definite question we asked, viz., what method it is proposed to adopt with regard to the unsettled point of composition of Boards, and upon the reply to this very definite and important question must depend the advisability or otherwise of continuing the negotiations.’

“ On Friday morning the N.U.R. received the following reply :—

“ ‘ Having considered the reply handed to us by Mr. Bellamy last evening, we wish to state that there has been no evasion on our part, as Mr. Clower’s letter of March 3rd is quite clear. If, however, it will assist you in your deliberations, we will add : That we shall demand a Sectional Board represented and elected by enginemen, motormen, firemen, and cleaners only, with full control. We trust, therefore, that you will now reply to the latter part of our first resolution handed to you. We still suggest that you will agree to the fulfilment of your agreement to meet jointly the General Managers’ Committee.’

“ To this the N.U.R. replied :—

“ ‘ That inasmuch as the reply of the A.S.L.E. & F. clearly indicates that they will create a division before the railway companies by demanding Sectional as opposed to Composite Boards, this E.C. decide that, whilst we are desirous of meeting the companies in response to their invitation, we are of opinion that it is undesirable, and we do not feel disposed to enter into negotiations through a deputation with divided councils on a fundamental principle, as such a course would involve division among the organised railwaymen of this country.’

“ Another communication was received from the Associated during the afternoon. It ran :—

“ ‘ In reply to your communication of this afternoon, we note your reply that you do not feel disposed to enter into negotiations jointly with the railway companies with the question of composition of Boards unsettled. We are of opinion that it would be possible to meet the companies in full agreement with all other principles of the scheme, and with a view of that agreement being arrived at we again press for a reply to the second clause of our first resolution, viz. : “ If the N.U.R. representatives think any agreement can be come to later in reference to this question, we are prepared to discuss the remaining items.” ’

“ The final communication sent on Friday was from the N.U.R., who said :—

“ ‘ That with a view to removing the deadlock in the negotiations which the communications that have passed appear to indicate, we decide to invite the Associated Executive to meet in full conference at 9-30 a.m. to-morrow.’

“ The Chairman (proceeding) : In responding to that communication which, I presume, you considered this morning, you are now here. Have you anything to say in opening, Mr. Wride,

“ Mr. G. Wride (A.S.L.E. & F.) : I wanted to say, Mr. Chairman, that it now appears to me that after all that has taken place since we separated that you have something in your minds with a view to removing the deadlock that has arisen. I should like, therefore, to ask you if you have any proposals to make to this Committee?

“ The Chairman : I was instructed to ask whether the position was still the same as yesterday, and whether your claim for Sectional Boards for locomotive and motormen would be insisted upon?

“ Mr. G. Wride (A.S.L.E. & F.) : I think I may say yes to that. I would also like to point out that you have not given even now an answer to the second part of the resolution we handed you on the first day. Give us that answer, and it may relieve the situation.

“ The Chairman : The next question they asked me to put to you will probably be a part answer to that question. Are you prepared to submit the question in dispute, that of Sectional or Composite Boards, to some independent tribunal to decide?

“ Mr. Wride (A.S.L.E. & F.) : I cannot answer that question immediately. I did not come prepared to answer it.

“ The Chairman : Because it had been thought during your absence you would probably have had these matters considered from this point of view. And so I was asked to put that question to you.

Mr. Thomas (N.U.R.) : The position is as Mr. Wride accurately interpreted it—

“ Mr. Wride (interrupting) : May I say that we appear to be in the same position as when we broke off the other day. Now, I want to appeal to you, Mr. Chairman, to say that it is quite unnecessary for individual members to be continually jumping up to make propaganda speeches. We feel that a lot has been said that need not have been said, and if it had not been said we might now be a bit nearer to the end. Our Committee are not here for propaganda purposes. We came here for a definite purpose, to obtain a yes or no. Whatever influence is brought to bear from that side will not alter the position we are in one iota. And you also claim that so far as the influence made by members on this side concerns you it will not alter your opinions either. Therefore, I hope that what takes place now will be very concise, so that no more valuable time will be needlessly wasted.

“ The Chairman : To that I can only say that so far as I have been concerned I have tried to be as concise as possible. I have not thought this to be the time or place for propaganda speeches. But I agree that some of them have been in the nature of propaganda speeches. Our friends—I do not wish to name anyone—will probably take the hint that this is a business to be settled as quickly as possible.

“ Mr. J. H. Thomas (N.U.R.) : With that I entirely agree. Is not the alternative proposal now made put forward with the object of

removing the deadlock? You want Sectional Boards. Our side wants a Composite Board. Both sides agree that it is unwise to meet the railway companies while we are divided. And the proposal now made from our side is this, to put it shortly: That, seeing there is no possibility of an agreement on this particular point, shall we try to avoid the possibility of going before the companies divided by both sides agreeing to submit this one point that appears to be in dispute to an independent arbitrator drawn, shall we say, from the ranks of the Labour Party? That is our alternative suggestion to try and bridge over this difficulty. No speeches need be made. It is put very plainly.

“Mr. Wride (A.S.L.E. & F.): I feel that I can answer that with confidence and say no to it at once. Though we have not yet viewed it from that standpoint, I am satisfied that, with a view to what has taken place, and will take place in the future, we are not prepared to agree to that course being taken.

“Mr. J. H. Thomas (N.U.R.): Then that means, of course, so far as these proceedings are concerned, that there is no possibility of your even reconsidering the new position.

“Mr. Wride (A.S.L.E. & F.): I see no reason for doing so.

“Mr. J. H. Thomas (N.U.R.): I feel bound to say that we feel, rightly or wrongly, that it would be disastrous to go before the companies divided. We feel that if the employers had to arbitrate between two Trade Unions it would show that there was a division among us, which would certainly have a bad effect upon the men in the country. It is solely with the desire to prevent that happening that this alternative suggestion has been made. If, as you say, the last word has been said, I think then that no useful purpose can be served by continuing negotiations. We cannot be expected to waste each others time, and the responsibility must be shared by each of us for this action.

“Mr. Wride (A.S.L.E. & F.): I can thoroughly appreciate the closing sentence of Mr. Thomas's speech. I feel sure that my Committee are unanimous that we don't want to show that on the question of the interest of the men we are divided. We don't want either side to say that the other has broken away. What I had in mind was that we should go as a pair-horsed coach rather than as a donkey dray and an elephant wagon. I think we should go side by side, each side accepting its own responsibility. We don't want to see in to-morrow's paper, “Breaking away of the Associated from the N.U.R.” The less said outside our own Committee the better. We shall not use this for propaganda purposes, and I am quite sure that you will not do so. We came here in sincerity, and first and last have carried out the instructions which were given us on more than one occasion. Even as late as the last week in September we formed a special conference to deal with this special question, and the result of it was of such a unanimous character that there could be no dispute. I wish to thank you for the courteous way you have received and heard us. I wish also to thank Mr. Thomas for the sentiments he uttered as to each side accepting its own responsibility.

"The Chairman: When I had the honour of being put into this position it was in the hope that with all the difficulties we had to face we should find ways and means to overcome them. And I am really sorry that we have reached a stage where we cannot find a way out of this little deadlock. You have put your position very clearly. As far as you are concerned you are bound by the decision of those to whom you are responsible. Rightly, you say you cannot go back on that decision. Therefore this side, feeling that it could not take upon itself the responsibilities of facing the companies and letting them be arbitrators between us, consider that there seems to be no chance of a common agreement. I regret it. It is not the first disagreement we have had, and perhaps not the last. But I did hope that it would have been one that we could have got over. As no useful purpose can now be served by prolonging this discussion it may as well to come an end. I hope the time is not long distant when we shall be able to find ways and means to get over little difficulties of this character. I am confident that the best interests of railwaymen will be served if we go together, and will not be if we go in two separate camps. So it is with great regret that I say that these proceedings are now at an end. I hope before long organised railwaymen will be able to use their organisations unitedly."

The "Railway Review" put our position well under the heading of an article "Sectionalism Gone Mad." After saying that their delegate meeting, having altered its old traditions of privacy to that of courting publicity it now took the Press into its confidence to publish its impotence, it continued: "Owing to its rabid sectionalism it ceased affiliation with the Trades Union Congress, so it federated with the Stationary Enginemen, with whom it has nothing in common, and so secured representation by a back door. That door failed when it came to a joint meeting with miners, railwaymen, and transport workers, and it has been shut out because it puts craft before occupation. Locomotive driving is a part of railway work, and the true line of development is to recognise this fact. But no, it cannot have all its own way, and consequently it is impotent, except to grumble or make mischief. That is one of its grievances, and it is one which is likely to continue. Another grievance is that it claims a seat on the Committee to Inquire into Railway Accidents. Again it is shut out, and some of its hotheads threaten to strike against the railway companies for something with which they have nothing to do. We can well understand why it remained only a threat. They know they are powerless. What have they ever done to ask for or press for an inquiry? Their record in this particular is on a par with what they do in every other direction. Immersed and absorbed by their own pride in their craft they have, with one exception, refused to ally themselves with those whose aid is essential to their success, and they surely reached the last stage of futility when they declined to consider the question of amalgamation or fusion with the N.U.R., or even to allow it to be placed on the agenda again unless twenty-five branches join in a requisition to that effect. Yet they have the audacity to want the N.U.R. to take a ballot of its loco. members only on

the question of composite boards for each railway, a policy which they condemn because it gives them only what they are entitled to and does not exaggerate their importance. Even when it makes a programme it is reduced to copying in a large measure that of the N.U.R."

Echoes of the 1911 strike and other events which followed kept cropping up. Mr. Thomas, because of Mr. Williams' illness, bore the brunt of the attacks, but the malcontents—Liverpool No. 3—had submitted to the March E.C. this concise resolution: "That in view of Mr. Thomas's recent action, this branch is of opinion that the time has come when his work as an official should cease." The matter arose at the Swansea A.G.M. and at a public meeting held there at that time, when representatives from Llanelly and other places interrupted the speech of Mr. Thomas; but they very much suffered in the contact, and, as the chairman said, they had not much success. So at that meeting and the A.G.M. they were very much discomforted.

The A.G.M. in question, representing 300,000 membership, was an epoch-making one. The President, Mr. Bellamy, at the close of his presidential address, used words which had a wider meaning than he knew: "We are passing through trying and troublous times. Labour is becoming articulate. The unrest which has been a feature of the industrial world still continues. We are assuredly on the eve of great changes." Change did come, and the great war came, which changed the face of the whole world. Things of minor interest fell away, and the world problems faced us. Life was in a new setting. Never in the life of a nation had there been such tense moments as when Sir Edward Grey announced in the House of Commons that the nation had decided on war. The destiny not of a nation but of the world lay in that. Perhaps never will the youngest of us forget the dread that had seized our troubled minds, wondering to what end the war would lead and how long it would continue; but the verdict, founded on an alleged assertion of Kitchener, had put it at three years. The world would soon lay in ruins, and men's hearts failed them for fear, dreading the things that were soon to come. And perhaps our worst fears were far short of what it came to be in the days of horror and agony that followed the result of the war. The man-eater of the race that had been since the blood of the murdered Abel again drenched the earth, which must have blushed as it drank it in was re-engaged. Henceforth we needed no lessons on the evil of war. They were writ large; and newer inventions of barbarity robbed even these isles of the safety from its horrors, which we, from our insularity, had been free. Devastating armies covered nearly the whole world, and "A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth; the land is as a garden of Eden before them; and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, nothing shall escape them. . . . Like the noise of chariots on the top of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array." "War with its million horrors and fierce hell" was the heritage of the world and the progressive hopes of the world were in ruins. The accumulated treasure

of centuries went into the holocaust of war, and the treasuries of the world were thrown into its vortex.

New and trying problems faced railwaymen with the rest of the world, and more than ever was the need for clear reason and sane action. They faced us at every turn. Soaring food prices, with shameless profiteering, men's wages, female employment and their wages, military Bills in Parliament, with conscription, which our union fought all along the line, conscientious objectors, exemption troubles, and a thousand and one other things lay about us, but we met them with courage and wisdom. Not that the leaders had an easy task; national needs and railwaymen's needs seemed sometimes at war. Bonus was added to bonus; bonus turned into wages. Truces were made, and when it seemed that the rising wage had reached its limit food prices rose yet still higher, and remuneration had again and again to be renewed. When the war broke out Messrs. Williams and Thomas were in America, and as quickly as war conditions would allow them they returned home. A Royal Commission on Railways had been set up on the previous October to "inquire into the relationship between the railway companies of Great Britain and the State in respect of matters other than safety of working and conditions of employment, and to report what changes, if any, are desirable in that relationship," and they had gone to make inquiries. During the war the Government took over the control of railways, and another chapter was added to the need of the nationalisation of railways. In the next chapter will be set out the wage problems and how they were met.

For a long while the writer of Co-operative Notes in the "Railway Review" had urged the advisability of co-operative banking on the plea that it would be financially profitable, and that it was not good business whilst other opportunities were open to place our money with capitalistic institutions. Workmen's associations could do with our custom and offer equal facilities in times of dispute. The curious effect of this advocacy was that it spread from union to union and they took up co-operative banking, whilst the advocacy which was in our own organ had not been embraced by the union it was an advocate for and a defender of. At length the Hull District Council did move, but the advocacy of it was coupled with the investment of the union funds with the Co-operative Wholesale. The E.C. placed this record upon their proceedings: "That, in reply to Hull and three other branches, we decide to instruct the Finance Committee to report to our next meeting upon the question of investing the union funds in the Co-operative Wholesale Society, and also upon the question of banking with the Co-operative Wholesale Society's Bank."

An amendment was moved: "That this E.C. recommend to the special or ordinary A.G.M. the alteration of Rule 8, clause 17, to allow the funds of the society to be invested with the C.W.S. for the purpose of the organisation of food supplies in times of industrial disputes." The resolution was carried. On November 24th the Finance Committee drew up the following report, which they presented to the E.C.

“REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE ON BANKING AND INVESTMENT ARRANGEMENTS.

“ To the Members of the Executive Committee.

“ GENTLEMEN,—In accordance with Decision No. 41 of your last meeting we have carefully gone into the question of the society's investments and banking arrangements, and not only ascertained all the information possible from the C.W.S., but in addition we asked our own bankers if they could make any better arrangements. We accordingly present to you the exact situation so far as our investigations go in order that you may have the whole facts before you.

“ Investments.—With regard to the society's investments, it will be obvious to you that no possible advantage can accrue by any change in method, inasmuch that whilst the C.W.S. would be prepared to give $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. on the society's investments they themselves reinvest in practically all the securities which the society now hold. You will see, therefore, that to introduce any change would be of no advantage to the organisation either in method or security; but, on the contrary, it would simply mean that we should lose the difference in the interest which we now get direct by higher investments.

“ Banking.—Regarding our banking arrangements with the National Provincial Bank, we desire to point out these have always been satisfactory, and every facility and assistance has been given to us. This, naturally, should not preclude us from seeking a change if it could be shown that the society would be the better for it. Of course, we are not unmindful of the kindred spirit of the co-operative movement and the relative advantages of strengthening same; but whilst keeping this clearly in mind we must always be guided by the fact that our organisation should be the first consideration.

“ C.W.S.—The banking arrangements in connection with the C.W.S. are part of the Wholesale movement. The Head Office is in Manchester, and they have branches at the following places: London, Newcastle, Bristol, and Cardiff. They offer us $3\frac{1}{4}$ d. per cent. on a deposit account, subject to a fourteen days' notice, but their system is to charge commission on all turnover. The commission would, approximately, amount to 9d. per cent. Further to this, it should be noted that they allow $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on current account, which, plus the $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. non-members' dividend, has made the rate 3 per cent. We may mention that in connection with any overdraft that should be required, such as was necessary in the miners' dispute, we are informed that same would be dealt with through the Head Office in Manchester. Here it is hardly necessary to point out that the advantage of having the Head Office of our bankers in London was, during the dispute, most beneficial, as our arrangements were made in a few hours. However, the C.W.S. say they have arranged overdrafts in a few days.

“ National Provincial Bank.—The system we adopt is that from day to day we watch the position of our current account and by a telephone message transfer any amount to deposit. No interest is

allowed on current account, neither is any commission charged on the turnover. The interest on deposit is governed exclusively, as you will be aware, by the position of the Bank Rate, which varies from time to time. We have had amounts as high as £45,000 on deposit at different times, and we must say that no difficulty has arisen in drawing on the deposit account, as no notice is ever required. In considering the matter we wrote to the N.P.B. and pointed out the large sums we deal with now compared with the old days, and asked if they could agree for any fixed rate on the deposit account or what other facilities they could offer. They replied: 'That whilst in no way entering into competition with any other bank, as, indeed, they would not agree to this, they were prepared owing to our long connection to make the following alterations:—

“ ‘ Deposit accounts : $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. under Bank Rate; minimum, $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; maximum, $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

“ ‘ Current accounts : In order that balances standing to credit shall not be idle pending transfer, if you will leave us a free balance of £3,000 in all we will allow $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on any amounts in excess free of commission on the turnover.’

“ We have stated the position so far as the financial advantages and disadvantages are concerned; but another and more important point we had to consider was the question of facilities, which, as you know, have been largely extended of late years in enabling our branches to pay into bank direct to our account, and the N.P.B. then acquaint us by bank advice. This has not only been advantageous, and a great success, but it has been of immense assistance to our branches in the deposit of their money. We have asked the C.W.S. what they can do in this direction, and in reply they point out that practically all the banks are their agents, and similarly the money could be banked in this way, the difference being that it would be credited to the C.W.S. at Manchester, and they would then credit to our account from there and send the advice to this office. As you know, our arrangements provide three days' grace after the end of each quarter, and the delay in having the advices sent to Manchester and then from Manchester to London would very seriously interfere with our procedure; indeed, it would be questionable whether the delay in this connection would not entirely upset the quarter's dues.

“ We are, gentlemen, yours faithfully,

“ P. HEWLITT.

F. C. FAGG.

S. LAZENBY.

C. BOWTELL.

A. HARBOUR.

J. H. THOMAS.

“ Assistant (Financial) Secretary.”

Mr. G. Alcock did not sign the report, as he dissented from some of the findings of his colleagues, especially that which dealt with co-operative banking. The E.C. adopted their report and moved that

“ From the information contained therein, we see no reason for departing from our present arrangements for dealing with the Head Office finances.” Allen, Clarke, Griffiths, Cuthbertson, Hewitt, Jones, and Robinson were against. The Head Office, who have to take conservative views in these matters, were opposed to the change. An appeal was tabled for the A.G.M. against this decision, but they were advised not to press it, as the next year being the year for branches to move amendments to rule they would have the matter in their own hands, and by not pressing it, it would be more likely to go by consent by not making sides on the matter, so when it came up on the agenda of the A.G.M. it was not moved. The next year the motion to bank with the Co-operative Wholesale was carried with one dissentient, and the financial advantages soon became apparent, whilst in the later period of a strike the value of it was increased.

On June 7th, 1916, Mr. J. E. Williams, the General Secretary, whose health had become undermined by the Labour Insurance troubles and nerve-racking life of the war period, tendered his resignation to the President of the society, and he presented it to the Executive with the following remarks :—

“ TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

“ GENTLEMEN,—It is with a great deal of regret that I have to report having received the following communication from our General Secretary :—

“ ‘ To the President and Members of the Executive Committee.

“ ‘ Gentlemen,—I beg leave to tender you my resignation and to notify you of my intention to vacate my position as General Secretary of the union on the 31st December, 1916.

“ ‘ In taking this step I do so with extreme regret; to sever my official connection with the union is like parting with life’s blood, as the union to me has been almost my very existence. I have been a continuous member during the whole of my adult life, having joined its ranks in the days of my youth—now 42 years ago—and have spent 39 years in its service, 25 years as a branch secretary, and 14 years as a Head Office official, independent of the many other positions of a representative character that I have been privileged to occupy.

“ ‘ During this long period I have seen many changes and have experienced some difficulties. I have seen its membership as low as 6,000, when it was not an easy matter to be a member, to organise, or to work for reforms, and when it required courage and determination to keep the advantages of membership before an always too apathetic body of railwaymen.

“ ‘ During my membership I have seen the old policy of “ Your humble petitioners ” pass away, with its circumscribed and limited opportunities of discussing the men’s grievances, and new machinery instituted in which all matters affecting the conditions fully discussed by the companies’ and the men’s representatives, around the

same table, on a basis of equality, and with our increasing membership and correspondingly increased power, this principle could be extended to the point when every condition affecting the working life of the railwayman, of every grade, will be a matter not for a one-sided and obviously prejudiced decision, but will be settled with the men's side of the case being fully and frankly recognised. My long experience confirms the view I have always held, viz., that calm and deliberate negotiations, with both sides recognising each other's difficulties, is the best and surest guarantee not only for peace but justice, and towards this end the individual efforts of all should be directed.

“ ‘The decision to resign has been forced upon me through ill-health. The serious breakdown I had about two years ago has left me with no alternative, as I am medically advised that another attack may be very serious to me. As I am desirous of a few years longer with my family I have decided not to prolong this risk.

“ ‘In relinquishing my position I do so with the satisfaction that the union has had the very best I could offer, although I know only too well my own shortcomings, and whether I have given satisfaction or otherwise, I have been prompted with one desire only, viz., to secure a happier life for the railwaymen of this country.

“ ‘For very many years I have been an earnest advocate of one union for railwaymen, and during my term of office as General Secretary it has been my pleasure in assisting the partial accomplishment of this most necessary reform, and I sincerely trust this principle may soon be extended, so that I may yet witness one united body working for the good of all railway workers.

“ ‘I desire most sincerely to tender to the Executive Committee and yourself my grateful thanks for the kindness I have always received from your hands, particularly since my unfortunate illness, and although on minor points we have sometimes disagreed, I have always felt the feeling of co-operation between us has been none the less sincere, and our differences on detail have cemented our friendship.

“ ‘I could not conclude this resignation without publicly tendering to my colleagues my gratitude for all the assistance I have received from them. Particularly does this apply to Mr. Thomas for the exceptional and ready assistance I have received from him. Many times when surrounded with what appeared to be almost insurmountable difficulties, his ever-ready, alert mind has been freely given in assisting to evolve them, no matter what physical inconvenience may have been necessary in its accomplishment.

“ ‘In addition to the work in connection with the Trade Union you entrusted to me the organisation of the Approved Section under the National Health Insurance, the result of which has been highly satisfactory. There being no procedure on which guidance could be obtained, I had to proceed upon lines that appeared most suitable

with an absolutely untrained staff, and although some modifications have had to be made, the society has progressed almost beyond our most sanguine anticipations. At present we have a membership of about 80,000, and our position second to none.

“ ‘In handing you my resignation I leave behind a record of conscientious and, I trust, honourable service, of which I feel proud.

“ ‘With the very best wishes for future prosperity,

“ ‘I remain, yours very sincerely,

“ ‘(Signed) J. E. WILLIAMS.’

“I know you will all share with me my expression of regret, more particularly in consequence of the cause that compels our esteemed General Secretary to hand in his resignation.

“I feel sure that you will all agree that his work on behalf of this organisation and railwaymen generally has been such that opponents and friends will recognise as being of the highest.

“His connection with this union and the late A.S.R.S. has been a long one, and I feel I am voicing the opinion of the whole of our members when I say that it is a record of unselfish devotion to the cause of uplifting railwaymen and the workers generally.

“I submit the matter for your consideration.

“Yours faithfully,

“ (Signed) A. BELLAMY, President.”

“Moved by Marchbank and Cramp: ‘That this Committee learns with regret that Mr. Williams has been compelled, owing to the state of his health, to tender his resignation as General Secretary. We decide to accept same, to take effect as from December 31st, 1916, and desire to place on record our sincere appreciation of the services rendered on behalf of the railwaymen of this country and the Labour movement in general by him as an official of this organisation. We trust that the state of his health shall so improve as to permit of him enjoying for many years along with his family a well-earned “retirement.”’

“Carried unanimously.

“Moved by Marchbank and Beardsley: ‘That this Committee decide to invite nominations from our branches for the position of General Secretary, in accordance with Rule 4, clauses 1 and 2. Nominations to be sent to the President, National Union of Railwaymen, Unity House, London, N.W., not later than August 26th, 1916.’

“Carried unanimously.”

The candidates and votes for the General Secretaryship were as follows:—

J. H. Thomas	107,333
A. Bellamy	32,772

Majority..... 74,561

Not long did the loving and lovable Jim Williams live to rest in his old age. He died on July 3rd, 1917, and was buried a few days later on a day when there had been one of the most terrifying of the

German air raids on London, the noise of which had not died away when we met to inter him. The following, from a well-known pen, describes the scene :—

“ Would it be a bold thing to say that in the fruitful history of our railway organisations not one has passed away that has left so deep a void, that has been so lamented, so loved, as our late revered Secretary, J. E. Williams. If affection could have stayed Death’s sharp sickle it would have been stayed. There was something in the personality of the man that caused the tendrils of loving affection to entwine themselves about him. It seems like going back into the morning of memory to find the first point of contact. I go back thirty-five years, but ‘ Jim ’ (we all familiarly called him Jim) is always there. Executive man, Auditor, Assistant General Secretary, then the highest position organised railwaymen could offer. In any and every sphere he brought manhood, character, cheerfulness, courage, and painstaking abilities. A husband of which any woman might be proud that had womanly discernment, a trusted colleague that would not betray a trust nor wound a friend, save and except when his intelligence forced differences, or when others took what it was not intended to give, because you could differ with him, and that strongly, without diminishing respect. You saw, if you had an eye to see, that it was principle that moved him to take the course he did, because his great heart was often at war with his intellect, and sometimes the heart took the spoils. True, he had strong words for perverted talent, but, then, that was because he held as a sacred principle that life and talent were a trust, and it was a sin against the sacredness of life to misuse what was given for mankind, not to combat evil, not to resist tyranny, and not to assist to remove that which fettered intelligence, freedom, and fraternity. The social instinct beat in his blood. He was what he was because he could be no other. I have seen his eyes moisten in the tragedy of life where it was beyond his power to assuage grief or to bend or break a power that held life in thrall. He suffered as being in the same body. He would not palter with wrongdoing. Often and often do I remember him at one A.G.M. : no need to mention the man or the year. Social purity was in question. The offenders’ protagonist charged all with the same offence at one time or another. He and I sprang to our feet together, but he got the first protesting word in, and at white heat he mercilessly thrashed the offender. When he finished one felt that the last word had been said.”

“ He, only in a general honest thought
And common good to all, made one of them.
His life was gentle, and all the elements
So mixed up in him that Nature might stand
And say to all the world ‘ This was a man.’

“ What a wealth of life was his ! He ‘ warmed both hands at the fire of life.’ Where good needed to be done ‘ Jim ’ was there ; and yet it seemed to me as if he shrank from public gaze. Duty found him, forced his path, and made his pace, and could the spoils be tabulated what harvests would be garnered ! It would need a book, and not a

newspaper column; fact could be laid to fact and ink mixed with intelligence and eloquent presentation, and even then we should have to stand back, survey the picture, and murmur the word 'incomplete.' Public controversies tend to obscure the good inherent in men who take part in them, but in our 'Jim' it never did; his geniality continued to shine most when the wordy conflict was highest, and his lovable nature was never warped by bitter speech. He shirked nothing that duty required him to do and when it was in his power to do it. As I looked backward and forward at the funeral procession and saw the long trail of men and beautiful banners, I thought such men do not pay tributes to a wasted life. Appreciation leaps to its feet and pays its tribute as here. What an example to us all; to youth with its surging impulses and generous instincts in the battleground against the wrong. What a lesson to maturer years! triumphing over physical infirmities, treating them as non-existent. Servant of God, well done!

"The clergyman who performed the funeral rites said there were present those who knew him better than he did, knowing more of his labours than himself, but he wanted to lay his little wreath of words upon his grave. Mr. Williams' integrity and honest character and soul was crystal clear, and one saw right into it, backed, as it was, with brotherly help, oneness of interest, sympathy, and love. Sixty years of good life was speaking to them, and they were about to take leave of it. He would have liked them who misunderstood his work and stigmatised him as an agitator to have known the true inwardness of the man by spending a few minutes in his company. As a Welshman, he had, in common with his own countrymen, all the best characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon race: tenderness, geniality, hospitality, were among his possessions, the same spiritual practicability, he being a most regular attendant at his church. In a life like his there was no need for tears. He was all that made for goodness, righteousness, and truth. He marched breast forward and never forsook his ideals. The work he did would never die, whatever shape it took, whether undertaken for the downtrodden and oppressed or the many causes to which he put his hand would not be lost. It was of more value than those who stood for republics or kings; it was something nobler, higher, and holier: It was all for each and each for all.

"Mr. A. Bellamy, president of the union, said there were times when it was difficult to find words one would like to utter. They had met to say farewell to life that we had known for long years, the larger part of it devoted to the work they were engaged in. Our brother was a loving father, a faithful husband, and a dear comrade, one who during his whole life spent what hours he had to spare trying to improve the lot of those by whom he was surrounded. A fierce hater of all wrong, he gave of his best, and whilst we said good-bye to all that remained of his earthly form, we could not say good-bye to the work he did so nobly and well. We could see some of the best work he had tried to do. His nature was affectionate and courteous, and they must consecrate their lives and do their share to forward the work he undertook.

“ Mr. J. H. Thomas, M.P., wanted to say that he spoke as a comrade. We were paying our last tribute of respect to one of whom it could truly be said that he lived for the uplifting of his class. They were mourning the loss of one whom to know was to love, and whose life stood as a shining example of all that was worthy and good in human life. He was a miracle of human courage, and forty years ago was declared to be no more. He met with a most serious accident, and his courage and determination was such that, though he lost a leg and part of one hand, and his head was injured, in spite of all this he stood forth as the ardent champion of men, and devoted himself to causes he believed to be right. It was due to the brave woman they had left in the house yonder to say the accident happened in their courting days, and her love and devotion stood out when she said, ‘ Crippled as he was, he needed her more than ever in his great affliction,’ and adding, ‘ He is more dear to me than ever.’ And so for forty years she had shared his purposes, had also shared in his triumphs. They were with her in sympathy in her great sorrow, and they could say to her that she had every reason to be proud of him. He had left her no pearls or jewels of this world, but he had left her more, a good name, that priceless heritage of life which he cherished and which they all should cherish. His work was finished and they lay him to rest. He gave the best of his life, and so we paid the last tribute of respect to our dear brother whose work of the downtrodden was unsparing and insistent. He sincerely thanked the Almighty that such a noble element was born, the fruit of whose life would never die.

“ Mr. Richard Bell, J.P., referred with emotion, to his old comrade. Not since his wife died four years ago this month had he felt as now. His death was one of the deepest cuts of his life. He and Mr. Williams became acquainted forty years ago last November; they had worked side by side on the railway; they had worked side by side in the organisation of railwaymen to build up the union, which was then only 9,000 strong. He had worked with him on the magisterial bench, and he found no man like our departed friend, a loyal—then Richard broke down, and the speech ended with a sob, more eloquent than any speech yet framed.

“ What a wealth of beautiful flowers that covered the conveyance set apart for them, and also the coffin and the top of the hearse. The one from the London Council, with its name wrought in red, showed to exceptional advantage. As I wended my way homeward I thought of that short poem of Longfellow’s, entitled ‘ Autumn’ :—

“ ‘ O what a glory doth this world put on
 For him who with a fervent heart goes forth
 Under the bright and glorious sky and looks
 On duties well performed and days well spent !
 For him the wind, aye, and the yellow leaves,
 Shall have a voice and give him eloquent teachings.
 He shall so hear the solemn hymn that Death
 Has lifted up for all, that he shall go
 To his long resting-place without a tear.’ ”

Chapter XXIII.

WAR AND "PEACE."

WE must now retrace our steps to 1914, when the stupendous conflict ensued, which stunned and bewildered the world, and of which no human foresight could give us a prospect to the end.

We had as a nation been trying to conserve human life, and private agencies and local authorities vied with each other by hand and brain to that end. Labour especially was a builder of men and was trying to make life freer and more abundant, and then the foundations of all things were shaken, plans laid waste, the brain numbed, constructive purposes turned to destructive ones, life—precious life that we sought to free—was swept into the vortex of war; life was not to be the same again. Love, the precious heritage of humanity, gave place to hate, and nations became passion swept. The peaceful arts of industry were turned into channels of war. Civilisation, which was being slowly developed, gave place to barbarism, and the newly conceived world was in ruins, commerce was disrupted, the channels of communication were broken, the strongest and best of our young manhood was given over to fire and sword; nationality, which had become a growing conception, was non-existent. War, whether for freedom or revenge, is hell, and nothing better can be made out of it; they are co-partners with death. Death and hell are in agreement.

Almost as soon as war was declared the E.C. met, and many new problems at once presented themselves, including membership of the Reservists, Territorials, and Volunteers, and application of benefits constructed for normal times to abnormal circumstances, because disablement and death were soon busy. The rules, of course, were silent. Proposals many and contradictory were before them, and they suspended contributions during active service and adjudged that as the necessities of the State had demanded service the State should be the contributing party. Lock-outs arising from trade dislocations soon settled themselves, as every worker, old and infirm, found an opening. They joined the War Emergency Workers' Committee and worked wholeheartedly with the Co-operators in the question of food supply and prices; accepted the suggestion of Miss Webb that the N.U.R. branches should co-operate with the Women's Guild to safeguard the interests of the worker; had interviews with the Government to make still more additional safeguards for the workers and the right to the guaranteed week. Some things they knew, and in others they could foresee, and in some they had to fight with shadows, which provided no substance to clutch. Looking back at that time now with a mind at leisure with itself, it is evident that our governing body did its work wisely and well.

From the very first stage there seemed to be nothing that general Labour did not foresee and as far as it was possible provide for. They had vision, and looked to the end of the war, foresaw its aftermath of unemployment through the dislocations of trade channels at home and abroad; urged upon our statesmen to take the long view which their intense absorption for war needs was apt to be overlooked, and which had they dealt with as was advised by Labour, disappointments would have been fewer, the suffering less keen, and it would have been an easier task to rebuild old walls. Labour had not read history in vain. Both the immediate and the future was in their range. Labour stood for all old advantages they had fought for and won, and made provision so far as thought and urging thought upon others could do. Before me there is many a page studded with resolutions which, coming to with an imagination, can offer nothing but praise. They had no experience of like efforts to guide them, and they took the unbeaten path with brains, resolution, and skill, steered clearly and securely, and brought the craft through the troubled waters. Perhaps never before in our history was the Head Office so flooded with applications for information and guidance. It was considered undesirable at that stage to introduce new proposals for conciliation machinery; the direct touch was surer and better. The old, that was under notice to leave, had for its date November 30th, 1914, and they gave it an indefinite form with an operation of six weeks, when it was considered desirable to introduce the new. Mr. Williams in the Annual Report of 1914, issued when we had well gone into 1915, expressed what thoughtful men felt and knew when he said :—

“ This report, I need hardly say, shows what a solid foundation the society was built upon. Although the war, so far as its effect upon commerce and industry, has falsified every anticipation, we would indeed be living in a fools’ paradise if we did not realise that there are lean years ahead, that the prosperity of the country at the moment is an entirely artificial one.

“ It is, therefore, the bounden duty of all to prepare for the reaction that inevitably follows all wars. Unfortunately there is no reason to believe that the world’s conflict in this connection will be any exception to the rule. The duty of our members is to further organise our forces so that the union will be able to meet the railway companies as the authoritative spokesman for the railwaymen of the United Kingdom, and also to fully realise that the true test of a union’s strength is to be ever ready to meet any and every call made upon it by loyalty to each other, confidence in our cause, and determination to stick together. Thus we can face the future with that experience of long years of struggle, of knowledge gained, a greater confidence born of greater strength, to bring about a brighter and happier time for the railwaymen of the country.”

By the beginning of 1915 food prices had soared upward through a restricted supply and shameless profiteering, which meant decreased wages in practice. Not wages but costs determined

its value, and the Executive Committee had soon to deal with it. We were in the rear of other industries, and there was national control of railways, so the E.C. decided to communicate with the companies, gain the consent, if possible, of the Associated, tabled a 5s. per week increase, to apply till a fresh agreement was made and new machinery set up, and for it to extend to the Irish railways. They placed the matter before the managers and adjourned to await the result. After negotiation they consented reluctantly to a proposal of 3s. per week increase to those rated at under 30s. per week and 2s. per week to those rated at 30s. per week and over, in preference to 2s. 6d. all round, with the proviso to review it at the end of three months or later. It applied to all those engaged in the manipulation of traffic; and they made efforts for the shopmen for a like apportionment. When the Government had notice to determine the agreement the companies were to agree to give them two weeks' notice. The report was signed by the two Trade Union representatives and two for the companies.

At least 60,000 railwaymen had enlisted, and the increased burden of labour was thrown upon those remaining; so that this alone, apart from high prices, made the settlement a very modest one. No hasty words or violent threats were used; it was just commonsense negotiation. Mr. Thomas put all the issues before a meeting at Leicester, and the Press winged the words to the minority section, who had uttered the hasty word "strike," which would have been a war in industry, with the other waging war. He told them, as he did all along, in words that were never meant to hide a thought, that those who advocated such rendered the greatest disservice it was possible to render; that it would not be a strike against the companies, but one against the nation. "My warning to any who create mischief is 'hands off.' We are handling the situation, and when we fail to have the confidence of the railwaymen, it will be for these people to step in. Until that time we hold the reins. My duty is to speak plainly to you and the greater number beyond the confines of this meeting, regardless of whether whatever I may say will be popular or unpopular. I believe you are on the eve of success. Have courage, have faith, be patient; your reward is at hand. Do not throw it away by ill-advised action.

This was his unwavering note throughout the war, that the nation was greater than the railwaymen in it. But at the same time he pleaded and worked for that which was right, just, and true, and no one can hold him up to reproach as having neglected a single duty, or that he slept during the negotiations. He asked the President of the Board of Trade questions and showed it covered 90 per cent. of the British companies, and how their organisation, the N.U.R., had made strenuous efforts to insure industrial peace, and hoped the Government would accept the findings. The latter, in reply, spoke of a genuine desire to settle disputes during these critical times, and hoped the parties outside it would soon come in. Commonsense, allied with patriotism, was all along in evidence, and Thomas was justified

in giving skilful praise, whilst he asked questions. It received the most amplest justification for what used to be a bogey—recognition.

Scotland soon agreed to the same terms, and seaports, including the Port of London Authority, also made advances. The shopmen and the London Electric Underground came in, and the Midland agreed to pay bonus to casual labour, except those under 18. The Scotch railways may have been subject to pressure from the English companies, the union having told the English companies that if they did not the agreement would be cancelled. Mr. Williams, at Edinburgh, showed the true inwardness of the negotiations. The North-Eastern followed close on the heels of this. The Sub-Committee appointed to deal with the war bonus said at the conclusion of its report: "The authority of the union to negotiate on behalf of railwaymen has now been established. Its influence in the future can only be maintained by the railway workers remaining loyally in its ranks, thus safeguarding its power and their own interests." As the poet says: "Few are the words, and softly are they spoken, but who shall tell the blessings hidden there." When the union cannot speak for a majority of the workers its power, if not non-existent, is sadly weakened. Think of the early pioneers, and how they would have rejoiced to have had this instrument in their hands.

The E.C. met again on October 1st to consider a further war bonus to meet the increased cost of living. They gave instructions to the Negotiating Sub-Committee and met a fortnight later to receive their report, which was, that 5s. per week had been reached for adults and 2s. 6d. for boys; but it was conditioned on the Scotch companies accepting, who seemed to have a double dose of capitalistic sin. They were instructed to open up with the Irish railways and all the other subsidiary ones included in the after settlement of the first adventure. Clause 5 of the agreement stipulated:—

"The National Union of Railwaymen and the Associated Society of Locomotivemen and Firemen undertake during the pendency of this agreement they will not present to the railway companies any fresh demands for increased bonus or wages, or general alterations in conditions of service, and that they will not give countenance or support either to a demand on the part of any of their members to reopen the settlement now made, or to any strike that might be entered upon in furtherance of such demand."

"Clause 6.—It was agreed that the truce entered into at the meeting between the parties hereon hereto on October 1st, 1914, shall continue in force until the agreement now made is determined."

The Irish companies, however, remained refractory. They were written to asking for a similar agreement, and the chairman of the companies wrote that it was not possible for him to arrange a meeting; and more communications still followed asking them to give immediate attention to the question and to take such steps to enable both sides to meet. The Midland and Great Western wrote that the tremendous pressure upon railwaymen in Great Britain did not exist in Ireland, nor

had the cost of living reached so high a standard as was prevalent in Great Britain, and that the bonus granted to their men covered the cost of living as it then was. They also drew attention to the fact that the Irish railways were not taken over by the Government. Negotiations took place with the Board of Trade and Mr. John Redmond, M.P. The E.C. passed a resolution that further efforts could only be successful when they were better organised, and asked them to direct their energies in that direction. During 1916 they raised the wages of the men with under 20s. from 1s. to 1s. 6d., and others earning from 20s. to 30s. a bonus of 1s. per week.

At the Nottingham A.G.M., 1915, they passed the following resolution:—

“That this Congress deeply deplores the descent upon Europe of the colossal avalanche of carnage and havoc, expresses its conviction that this calamity is the outcome of the insatiable greed for gold and lust for power on the part of a small section of mankind, and condemns the spirit of militarism and hatred that has served to provoke this murderous outburst. Nevertheless, this Congress desires to set on record its appreciation of the spirit that has prompted the large number of our members to so magnificently respond to the ‘call,’ sincerely laments the loss of those who have fallen, and extends its deepest sympathy to the relatives and dependents in their bereavement, and earnestly hopes that those of our members who have been wounded in the fight will speedily be restored to health and strength. Further, this Congress affirms the need for adequate provision being made by the Government for all those incapacitated as a result of their service to the country as well as for those dependents who have been bereft of their breadwinners, and pledges itself to bring pressure to bear upon the Government to this end. Finally, this Congress expresses the hope that long before it assembles again the fires of war will have been extinguished and the fury of national hatreds will have ceased, and that peace and construction shall permanently triumph over the forces of death and extinction.”

During August, 1916, the E.C. requested an interview with the Prime Minister on the control of prices, as they had constantly been on the ascending scale, but he was unable to concede to the request. The General Secretary was thereupon instructed to write him that the Government must take responsibility for any demands they might make upon the railway companies. They gave notice for the termination of the truce and applied for an immediate advance of 10s. per week over and above the present bonus to meet the increased cost of living, in connection which the following resolution was passed:—

“That inasmuch as the Government have taken no effective steps to control the prices of the necessities of life, this Committee, in conformity with the instructions of the A.G.M., decides to make an application to all the railway companies in the United Kingdom for an increase of 10s. per week for the whole of our members on the following grounds: (1) That the duration of the war has extended

beyond the period contemplated by the contracting parties to the present agreement; (2) that the cost of commodities has risen and is still rising in a higher proportion than is warranted by the present position of the nation. The present earnings of our members are insufficient in many cases to maintain decent conditions of life."

A Sub-Committee was appointed to deal with the companies. A settlement was made on the basis of 5s. per week for adults and 2s. 6d. for juniors, making the bonus 10s. and 5s. respectively. As a Special General Meeting was sitting during the progress of the negotiations they accepted the responsibility. There were difficulties with other unions, so that a clear field was not given to the N.U.R.; but what was obtained was by their effort, and in spite of competing interests. Mr. Thomas, in announcing the settlement, said: "You will see that it includes all men and boys who are at present in receipt of the war bonus. A great effort was made to include both shopmen and women, but with regard to shopmen, unfortunately for us, the craft unions themselves had sent in a demand which was refused by the companies, and under the terms of the Munition Act the matter was automatically referred to arbitration, even before the completion of our negotiations. With regard to women, here again we have arranged for a meeting to take place within the next week or so to discuss the whole question, having regard to the fact that they were out of the last agreement."

The supreme governing body having decided that the results of all negotiations should be submitted to an A.G.M. or Special General Meeting, which, whilst it might show distrust of the Executive, had the effect that acceptance or rejection of proposals had finality so far as that stage was concerned. The general managers of the committee of railway companies wanted to know what the powers of the Negotiating Sub-Committee were, and the E.C. informed them that all proposals had to be submitted to the supreme governing body.

By March, 1917, with mounting prices, the wage value had diminished and several branches had asked for an increase of 10s. per week wages, time and a-half for night work, double time for Sundays and Bank Holidays, and that the six weeks' notice to terminate the truce should be given in order to give effect to the new demands. They also asked for the elimination of the non-Trade Union element on railways. To the latter oft-repeated request the soft answer was always given that the time was "inopportune."

The companies during 1916 had refused to adopt a sliding scale to keep a more exact agreement with wages and increased food prices. The E.C. decided that, owing to the hardships inflicted by the increased cost of living, the great strain of increased labour owing to staff depletion, and the introduction of female labour, they would endeavour to meet demands without any unnecessary delay of instituting new machinery, and made the demand of 7s. 6d. per week increase of bonus, with time and a-half for overtime and night work, with double time for Sundays and Bank Holidays, and that it should apply to both male and

female labour. The difficulty of the E.C. not having plenary powers to conduct negotiations and accept findings without consultation with, and acceptance of, the general meeting was apparent at every stage and involved delay, and found expression in a resolution that was defeated: "That, in view of the previous experience of the A.G.M. in connection with negotiations for an increase of war bonus, when they conferred the powers of settlement to a sub-committee of six members of this body, this committee is of opinion that the best interests of our members would be served by this body accepting responsibility for affecting a settlement of the present demand, and decide to act accordingly." It was a courageous proposal, but the cry of its being undemocratic and against decisions would have involved a storm. Slow, tardy movements had to accord with democracy, but they did decide on a Special General Meeting for April 11th in accordance with the Bath A.G.M. decision and Rule 2, clause 6, at which meeting they decided to record votings for and against, and even record the neutrals. Resolutions were proposed to press for the full demand, to meet the railway E.C. again, and press for a demand for a 5s. bonus for women and a bonus of 2s. 6d. for the seventh turn of duty on a Sunday, and another that in view of the cost of living having gone up 100 per cent. since August, 1914, they declined to accept, and now that Irish railways were under Government control no settlement would be acceptable that did not include the United Kingdom, and yet another for referring it to the branches for the delegates to receive the necessary instructions, but they were all turned down, and finally by 34 votes to 23, with two Irish neutrals, they decided: "That this Special General Meeting having heard the report of the sub-committee, decides to accept the offer made," so that the agreement was signed that employés of 18 years and upwards receive 5s. per week bonus, and those under 18, except boys engaged since January 1st, 1915, at rates of pay which exceed by 7s. 6d. or more the rates usually paid to boys occupying positions similar to those in which newly engaged boys are working 2s. 6d., provided that the weekly amount of any increase in rates of wages which may have been given to any grade of employés on any railway by any Arbitration Court since the agreement of September, 1916, was concluded, shall be treated as part of the additional bonus now agreed to be given. That the war bonus paid to female employés under the agreement made between the General Managers' Committee and the representatives of the N.U.R. at a meeting on November 2nd, 1916, shall be increased by the following amounts: If 18 years of age or over 2s. 6d., under 18, 1s. 3d., but it was not to be given to those not wholly employed in railway duties, such, for instance, as wives or relatives of railway employés living in gatehouses and receiving an acknowledgment for attending to the gates. That an employé working on a Sunday, and having been available for duty on the previous six weekdays, shall receive for such Sunday turn an allowance of one-sixth of the amount of the addition made to the weekly bonus under the settlement. The revised bonus was to commence on April 9th, 1917, the truce to continue in force. The agreement made between the Railway Executive

Committee, the craft unions, and the N.U.R. with regard to the shopmen practically covering the same principles, so far as they applied, and a little later those other railways that had not come in with the national settlement came in on the same terms which included Ireland. During this period of stress Mr. Thomas's health broke down and he was granted leave of absence in order to recuperate.

It was just at this time that a remarkable libel action was fought in the Law Courts between the leaders of the N.U.R. and the Associated. They had not even the merit of originality, because something akin was done on the District Railway years before by leaders of the same body with regard to Mr. Bell, but which Mr. Foot, of the West Brompton Branch, in a few terse sentences blew to smithereens. The point of difference, however, was the evident facts of a widespread conspiracy on the part of the Associated leaders to discredit those of the N.U.R.; to try and prove that "Codlin's your friend, not Short," and it was one of the most pitiable cases from the defendants' point of view that was ever brought into court. The N.U.R. had, in the first place, obtained a bonus from the South-Eastern and Chatham, and Mr. Thomas interviewed Sir Guy Granet and Mr. Sam Fay, and Mr. Runciman, the President of the Board of Trade, to obtain the same for all others. This was in December, 1914. The companies would not negotiate unless the Government, who had control of the railways, assumed some responsibility for any increase. Mr. Thomas kept pegging away at the question. On January 11th Mr. Bromley wrote to the companies concerning the new conciliation scheme, and asked for a meeting with two representatives from the N.U.R. and two from the Associated to meet two of the managers to discuss the new machinery, but did not in the letter refer to the bonus question, and Mr. Clowes saw Messrs. Williams and Thomas, suggesting that they should bring the Associated into the matter. Both got into touch with Mr. Bromley, who said to Mr. Williams, "I have never heard of a war bonus before." Then the Tubes, which were outside Government control, were promoting a Bill for Parliament to give them certain powers with reference to fares, and Mr. Thomas agreed that as the Tubes wages could not be settled without this he would support the Bill, and bring all into a common line. The District was taken over by the Government because it was considered to have some war value, but not the others. The Bill was passed, with minor alterations, and bonus was granted. In the bonus settlement the boys under 18 were left out. In these matters the N.U.R. conducted ways and means. The unions came to close quarters in June and made claims for an additional war bonus for the boys also to be included. It was urged by Mr. Bellamy, when they came to a deadlock with regard to all-round bonus, that they might settle the boys' wages, but Sir Guy Granet would not consent to anything but that the whole matter should be referred to the Government. At first the companies would only agree to 1s. for the boys, when Mr. Bellamy suggested that the whole matter should go before the Government, and Sir Guy promised that it should. It went before

the E.C.'s of the two unions, the N.U.R. instructing their Sub-Committee to press for the full claim, whilst Mr. Bromley said they were instructed to get as much as possible for the lads, but not to take less than 1s. 6d., and not to accept a settlement unless something was done for their members. They discussed with Sir Guy Granet, and all agreed that in view of the German peril a strike was unthinkable. To this all parties agreed, and Mr. Bromley said, "We would not countenance a strike under any circumstances." When the matter was ending, and it was found that nothing further could be done, Mr. Thomas made this remark: "I quite realise that these things are protracted sometimes for the purpose of saying if you had kept on as long as your neighbour had, or whatever the particular person is, you would have got something more, and I hope no one will say that sort of thing here." Mr. Bromley said: "You mean me in that," and Mr. Thomas assured him that he did not, adding "Neither I nor anybody else is capable of that." When the parties met on June 17th they all parted on amicable terms. They afterwards had tea together at a café at King's Cross, when Mr. Thomas, who was doing recruiting work, and had a pass for the purpose, jokingly referred to this pass. This was afterwards referred to as Mr. Thomas having a pass from the railway companies. Then the Associated issued a circular and published matter in their journal that the men on the N.U.R. side had said "that the national position requiring industrial peace was of more importance than a bonus of 30s. per week to the men," and that their side was standing courageously for the claim, and to show no further division, after making a protest, accepted the position, that Thomas had sold the pass, and so on. Then a series of meetings was held in the country, and the verisimilitude of the matter in the speeches was of such a nature that made our own union think there was a conspiracy of misstatements made to further their own organisation at the expense of the N.U.R., and that had our side but done as they did much better terms could have been obtained. They are of a remarkable similarity, sometimes of words, but for oneness in ideas they could not be surpassed. Both sides went into the box. The trial lasted five days, and the jury returned a verdict against the Associated members. The decision was that Messrs. John Moore, W. W. Cooke, W. Gamble, and J. Bromley had conspired together to slander the plaintiffs, and awarded damages of £150 to Mr. Thomas, £150 to Mr. A. Bellamy (the President of the union), £50 to Mr. Williams, £25 to Mr. Lowth, £25 to Mr. Hudson, £25 to Mr. Cramp, £25 to Mr. Charles, and £25 to Mr. Cuthbertson, £475 in all. It was surely one of the most pitiable cases ever brought into a court in a matter of rival organisations from the Associated point of view. They asked for a stay of execution, which Mr. Justice Darling refused. He agreed with the verdict.

The A.G.M. of 1917 directed the E.C. that all future increments should be conducted as a wage movement, and not bonus, and that they should enter into negotiations for the conversion of present bonus into wages. They formed a Sub-Committee of four, with the President and General Secretary, to meet the companies on July 23rd, and in

November made an application for an advance on the war wage of 10s. per week and an equal amount on piecework. Owing to the increased number of lads taken on in the service instructions were given to obtain a revision of the age from 18 to 16 for lads. A Special General Meeting was fixed for November 20th, which meeting decided for an eight-hour day, the conversion of bonus into wages, a guaranteed day and week, double time for overtime and Sunday duty, abolition of piecework, tonnage, and bonus, with other proposed changes, by way of a national programme. With regard to the proposal of the companies of 5s. per week, it was expressed as inadequate to meet needs, and they rejected it and instructed the E.C. to resume negotiations for a substantial increase in the amount offered. In the meantime certain sections had adopted a "ca' canny" policy, which broke off the negotiations with the companies. The London Council also issued a circular, which was condemned as prejudicing the authority of the union, and later, Liverpool having gone back to normal working, the London Council circular was referred to the E.C. to deal with; but in the interests of peace they decided to take no further action beyond issuing a warning against issuing such documents. The Special General Meeting was transferred from Leicester to Unity House. Negotiations having been renewed and submitted to the special meeting on November 29th, they accepted the results in the following resolution and memorandum:—

"That this Special General Meeting, having heard the report of the Sub-Committee, decide to accept the offer made conditionally upon the same increases being granted to our members on the Irish and other railways not included in these negotiations."

There was a section of the meeting that believed it would be unacceptable owing to the difference between the shopmen and others, which had many complications, among them the craft unions, and the award of the Committee of Production.

"Memorandum of Meetings between the Railway Executive Committee and representatives of the National Union of Railwaymen held on November 15th, 19th, 27th, and 29th, 1917.

"The meetings were held to consider an application made by the National Union of Railwaymen on behalf of their members that an increase should be made to the existing war wage of 15s. per week.

"After discussion, it was agreed that the war wages now being paid under agreements previously entered into shall be increased as under:—

	s.	d.	
Male employés 18 years of age and upwards...	6	0	per week
Boys under 18 years of age	3	0	„
Female employés 18 years of age and upwards	3	0	„
Females under 18 years of age	1	6	„

"These increased payments shall apply as from November 26th, 1917.

“ Such additional wages are to be regarded as a war advance intended to assist in meeting the increased cost of living, and are to be recognised as due to and dependent upon the existence of the abnormal conditions now prevailing in consequence of the war.

“ This agreement is supplemental to previous agreements entered into between the Committee of General Managers or the Railway Executive Committee and the Trade Unions, and shall remain in operation without amendment until March 31st, 1918, and shall then be subject to revision only if there shall have been a considerable alteration in the cost of living as shown by the Board of Trade returns since the date of this agreement.

“ Signed on behalf of the Railway Executive Committee :—

“ H. A. WALKER.

“ Signed on behalf of the National Union of Railwaymen :—

“ A. BELLAMY.

J. H. THOMAS.

“ In addition to the above, a special bonus at flat rate for the three weeks preceding November 26th, 1917, will be paid as under :—

	s.	d.	
Male employés 18 years of age and upwards...	6	0	per week
Boys under 18 years of age	3	0	„
Female employés 18 years of age and upwards	3	0	„
Females under 18 years of age	1	6	„

“ November 30th, 1917.

“ The following are the conditions covering the increases to shopmen :—

“ 1. The men concerned aged 18 years and over shall receive 5s. per full ordinary week.

“ 2. To boys and youths and apprentices under 18 years of age there shall be paid 2s. 6d. per full ordinary week. Boys and youths and apprentices on attaining the age of 18 shall receive a further advance of 2s. 6d.

“ 3. The case of pieceworkers, premium bonus workers, and other men working on systems of payment by results, the amount is to be paid by the firms at the rate of 5s. per full ordinary week over and above the week's earnings of the men concerned calculated on the present basis.

“ 4. The advances hereby awarded are to be paid as from the beginning of the first full pay in December, 1917.

“ 5. The amounts hereby awarded are to be taken into account in the calculation for payment for overtime or night duty, or for work on Sundays and holidays; but they are not otherwise to apply to or affect present time rates, premium bonus rates, or piecework prices, and are not to be taken into account as part of the time rates for the purpose of fixing new piecework prices or bonus rates.

“ Female employés 18 years of age and upwards, 2s. 6d. per week.

“ Female employés under 18 years of age, 1s. 3d. per week.”

At each of these settlements it was no accident that at some important place Mr. Thomas made a speech explaining not only the award, but also the difficulties as well as the triumphs. This time it was at Croydon, when he told them that on more than one occasion during the happenings of the past few days there was a very serious danger of a rupture of great magnitude in the railway world. In the negotiations they had been mindful of the strength and the justice of the men's claims, but had not been unmindful of the national claims that lay behind all, that in spite of criticism and abuse and of folly, that when the history of the war was written no chapter would chronicle a greater sacrifice or show a prouder record than the action of railwaymen during the last three years. He had said repeatedly that war wages and bonus was not the best way of dealing with the problem; that these created the vicious circle of mounting prices with adjustments which did not square with mounting prices. Whilst men were giving precious life for their country, no man or people should be allowed to make profit out of the blood and sacrifice which these men yielded. They were not so much anxious to increase wages as to stop profiteering, which made increases a necessity. That was the main object which was never lost sight of in the national crisis through which they were passing. It was the duty of every individual, as of every section of the people, to subordinate their individual and sectional interests to the interests of the country as a whole. It was that spirit which animated the railwaymen in entering into what was called the truce agreement of 1914, but it proposed that sacrifices should be equal for all, and we had not gone far before one section was profiteering at the expense of the workers, and that the spending power of railwaymen was seriously interfered with. The pre-war condition of railwaymen accentuated the phase, as they were the lowest paid of any class of workers, but whilst they railed at the companies and passed resolutions of condemnation, it was not the companies that were to blame, but their own apathy, selfishness, and indifference: they had never placed a sufficient value upon their labour, and so were treated as they deserved to be treated. Point by point he outlined the facts, the difficulties, pointed out the difference between negotiating for a few and that of many, and that 10s. a week more meant an annual charge of £17,500,000. Inflation, borrowings, living upon the future by present mortgaging, and a large array of other facts stand out in this statesmanlike speech, perhaps one of the most closely reasoned, enforced by bedrock facts, foundations, principles, vision, and judgment, as he "dipped into the future, far as eye could see." It was one of the best of the many good speeches that he made during this time of national calamity. To those who thought the path of negotiation was so easy that we had only to throw a few figures at the heads of those we were bargaining with, state a proposition, make a demand, lay it upon the table, walk out of the room, and re-enter in a few minutes and find our bill accepted were not the actual facts. Intelligence met intelligence, figures were put against each other, facts faced facts; there were two sides to a proposition, there was resistance to demands, and success

had to be plucked out of it all, not meeting as agitators seeking their blood and the others trying to squeeze the last drop of that same precious fluid. They were met fairly and squarely, friendly in the main, and with a genuine desire to come to a common agreement, which should meet the difficulties and give satisfaction. Then he condemned the "slow gear" policy of Liverpool, and how nearly that policy of doing as little as possible work in the longest time came to wrecking the cause, and he plumped for honour among workmen, and claimed that as the very basis of honourable conduct for all that those who themselves practised it could best demand it, that no section of a union had a right to dictate or determine the policy, but that it must be by right, by influence, by intelligence, well grounded in reason, and facts to back reason, that collective findings demanded obedience, that minority disorder meant anarchy, and in a few clear-cut sentences he surveyed the field and showed the findings, saying: "Don't forget that it took forty years to establish official recognition. Don't forget that hundreds and thousands of our best men were sacrificed and victimised in the struggle for recognition. Don't forget that many of our grey-haired veterans fought magnificently to bring about the time when railway companies and ourselves should meet face to face on behalf of both sides. Surely that 40 years' sacrifice, the result of all these years of plodding, ought not to be ruthlessly cast on one side and probably sacrificed by any section of men in any part of the country. Our rules may be wrong, our constitution may be wrong, but it is a constitution that they the members have made for themselves, and it is, therefore, a constitution that they must abide by." It is the voice of a leader that led, that did not weigh words in troy scales, and uttered sentences to hide thoughts. They were wise words, it was a brave and forceful speech, and who is there among us that took part in our work in the old days, when the path was uphill all the way, when despair often plucked at our heart strings, when men were few and the work was great, the difficulties many and the obstacles seemingly insurmountable, but now that the days had come when the ripe, plucked fruit was in our hands, and many other things lay scattered at our feet like flowers, who did not feel like the old prophet who spoke of the time "when everlasting joy was upon our heads and sorrow and sighing had fled away"? They fought, the present generation reaped the result of their arduous toil, anxious thought, and much suffering.

I ask my readers to read the sentences I penned in the life of our dear old father John Dobson—when he fought, and was cast adrift, and he was but one of the vast army that both failed and won, that put heart and conscience into their work, and gave years of unstinted toil that others might enter into the heritage of life and find a smoother path than that which their blistered feet had to encounter in their weary pilgrimage. Mr. Thomas had imagination as well as vision, judgment, and ability, and his mind could take hold of the past, people the present with the heroic efforts of the dead, because Death's scythe has taken a heavy swarth, and only a few remain who sowed what others reap.

Fifty years have gone, and the few living as the many dead should be held in everlasting remembrance for their tearful toil, which as the mower "Filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom." He recounted the gains: "Six shillings was offered to the traffic men, dating from the week commencing last Monday, and it was agreed that, in addition, every man should receive three weeks' back pay at the flat rate, or 18s. back pay in addition to the 6s." Then he passed on to evils of sectionalism, by the shopmen being divided in the various unions, and the award that was given them by the Committee that dealt with them; to the South Wales threat to strike; and then this: "I do not wish to make debating points with another society—that would be easy—but I want to drive home the moral. I do desire locomotivemen to realise that you have in the events of the past week a clear illustration of the absolute necessity of having one united body to cater for all railwaymen." A member of the Associated then asked why, and Mr. Thomas replied: "Why, because you get 5s. on your own as a section, and we get 6s. for you with arrears. I may be hasty in my judgment of what your attitude may be towards this increase we have obtained for you. If my friend and his colleagues do not think it is a good thing, there is only one moral test available, and it is one which is easy of application: When this 18s. back pay is offered let them say, 'No, I am not entitled to that, I return it to you.' But if that is not their action, then, I repeat, the moral of the matter is obvious to everybody. On the other hand, I hope the non-unionist will clearly recognise how his hand ought to tremble next week. If he can with a clear conscience and a steady hand take this money, then God help him, for his case is hopeless. And what is more important to remember is that, so far as the union is concerned, here is another illustration of the strong, solid power lying behind a united body of men." He raised the question of a strike: "It would not be a strike against the companies, it would not be a strike against the capitalists, but a strike against the men who are risking their lives for us."

At this meeting questions were showered upon him with regard to women, the shopmen, and other matters. The answers were clear and convincing. A circular was issued at the same time as this speech, and all the facts were before the members. One great thing had been affected, apart from other material gains. It was: Bargaining by one union for all railwaymen with all companies. The fear is that this great gain is not sufficiently recognised by all. Efforts did not stay at what had been gained, but the governing body made endeavours to bring in all other subsidiary authorities, such as the Port of London Authority, light railways, the Underground Electric Railways, and the Manchester Ship Canal. There was sleepless vigilance, which applied to shopmen and women. The Irish agreement did not expire till December 7th, so it was impossible at that time to bring them within the British agreement. With regard to women, some members would have liked to have placed them outside the pale of railway employment, but the

more farseeing saw the national necessity, and apart from that, equal rights for either sex was against the proposal. Besides, it was unfair that sex should be any disqualification for any form of work that lay within the range of their ability. A man with a family of all daughters would be placed at a disadvantage through the freaks of nature if that did not obtain. What the union aimed at was equal pay for the same form of service, otherwise it would have an undermining factor, and if it was desirable that they should be clear of railways in occupations which had hitherto been the prerogative of men, it could best be obtained if the same conditions operated in both cases, irrespective of sex. They laboured for this, with difficulty, and not without some success.

Early in 1918 the same form as before was set out. An application was made for a review of the settlement, the Committee to negotiate set up, and the notice of termination tendered, and also for the conversion of war bonus into wages, and to make it retrospective from August 1st, 1917. After negotiation a Special General Meeting was held at Unity House on April 24th, when there was submitted the proposals for an increase of the war wage from 21s. to 24s. for the men and half that sum for women and boys, which they considered inadequate, and pressed for a substantial increase on the amount. They adjourned, and the Committee again met the other side, when the Railway Executive agreed to make it 25s. for those over 18 and 12s. 6d. for women and boys. They entered into an agreement to that effect, and pressed upon the union Executive to obtain the same for the Irish railways and all others that were not included in the agreement, and also the dining-car staff.

"Memorandum of Meeting between the Railway Executive Committee and representatives of the National Union of Railwaymen held on April 16th, 24th, and 25th, 1918.

"The meetings were held to consider an application made by the National Union of Railwaymen on behalf of their members that an increase should be made to the existing war wage of 21s. per week.

"The members of the Railway Executive Committee called attention to the last clause of the agreement entered into on November 30th, 1917, which lays it down that the agreement then entered into shall be subject to revision only if there shall have been a considerable alteration in the cost of living as shown by the Board of Trade returns since the date of the agreement, and asked how the representatives of the National Union of Railwaymen justified bringing forward their present application.

"Mr. Thomas, on behalf of the National Union of Railwaymen, agreed that there had not been any considerable alteration in the cost of living since the date of the last agreement, but stated that circumstances had altered as a result of the 12½ per cent. bonus on earnings having been extended to a large section of railwaymen. He contended that as railwaymen were doing work which was essential to the carrying on of the war his members were entitled to be compensated either by the extension of the 12½ per cent. or in some other manner. He,

however, did not make a direct application for the payment of 12½ per cent. bonus on earnings, but contented himself with making an application for some increase in the war wage.

“ After discussion, it was agreed as follows :—

“ (a) That the war wage now being paid to persons engaged in the manipulation of traffic, under agreements previously entered into, be increased as under :—

“ Male employés 18 years of age and upwards, 4s. per week.

“ Boys under 18 years of age, 2s. per week.

“ Female employés 18 years of age and upwards to receive a war wage of 12s. 6d. per week, subject to reduction in cases where the women are receiving pay in excess of the minimum rates of pay for men filling similar positions, but with the understanding that all women employed in grades embraced within the conciliation scheme are to receive a minimum increase of 2s. per week under this agreement.

“ Female employés under 18 years of age to receive half the increase of war wage given to adult female employés, whatever such increase may be, with a minimum of 1s. per week increase.

“ (b) These increased payments to apply as from the first full pay week after the date of this agreement, namely, April 25th, 1918.

“ The representatives of the National Union of Railwaymen agreed that they would not hereafter bring forward any demand for or based on the 12½ per cent. bonus on earnings, nor give support to any such demand put forward on behalf of any body of railwaymen concerned in the manipulation of traffic.

“ It was further agreed that the increase in the war wage now conceded should not be granted to any man who is now in receipt of the 7½ per cent. or 12½ per cent. bonus on earnings, and that it should be merged in such 7½ per cent. or 12½ per cent. bonus in any case where the 7½ per cent. or 12½ per cent. bonus is given to a man not now in receipt thereof, and to whom it may be extended.

“ Signed on behalf of the Railway Executive Committee :—

“ (Signed) H. A. WALKER.

“ Signed on behalf of the National Union of Railwaymen :—

“ (Signed) C. T. CRAMP.

“ 25th April, 1918.”

J. H. THOMAS.

The Committee on Production met and issued their award to the shopmen, and in the under-mentioned agreement specified its application :—

“ RAILWAY SERVANTS—ARTISANS AND ARTISANS’ LABOURERS.

“ 1. The parties to this reference are (1) the Railway Executive Committee and (2) the National Union of Railwaymen, the Railway Crafts Organisation Committee of Craft Unions, and the Workers’ Union.

"2. The claim submitted was for the payment to artisans and artisans' labourers employed on the railways in or in connection with the railway shops of a bonus of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. if employed on time rates, or of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. if employed on piece or bonus rates.

"3. The matter was referred by the Ministry of Labour to the Committee on Production for decision and representatives of the parties were heard on 20th March, 1918.

"4. The award of the Committee is that the workmen concerned, aged 21 years and over, and who are paid as plain time workers, shall receive as from the beginning of the first pay week which followed 1st January, 1918, a bonus of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on earnings which shall not alter or become part of their time rates.

"5. To workmen of 21 years of age and over who are pieceworkers, or are paid on a premium bonus system or any mixed system of time and piece, or any system of payment by results, a bonus of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on their earnings shall be paid as from the first full pay week which followed 1st January, 1918.

"6. In any case where payment has been made to workmen pending the general consideration of the position of the men concerned in relation to the bonus of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. or $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., whether by agreement or as a result of arbitration, the amount of such payment shall in the case of workmen not covered by Orders Nos. 1,061 and 1,301 merge in the bonus awarded under clauses 4 and 5 of this award, and such bonus shall as from this date be in lieu of and in substitution for any such other payment.

"7. The bonus of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. hereby awarded shall be upon the basis that the war wage advance is 20s. per week, and in cases where a war wage advance of more than 20s. has been paid the excess over 20s. shall merge in the bonus awarded.

"8. It was agreed between the Railway Executive Committee and the unions that they would meet to consider the application of this award to the various grades, and that they would report back to the Committee for their approval the proposals arrived at.

"WILLIAM W. MACKENZIE.

J. DUNCAN ELLIOT.

F. S. BUTTON.

"H. J. Wilson, Secretary, 5, Old Palace Yard, 26th March, 1918."

"Arising out of Clause 8 of the Committee on Production's award, meetings with the Railway Executive Committee have taken place, and a list of grades submitted to the Committee on Production, who have approved of the following grades of shopmen being included in their award, dated March 26th, 1918, of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to railway shopmen."

The ink was scarcely dry on the April agreement before some wanted an upward revision of wages, but the oft-used word "inopportune" was once more laid under tribute. They had been negotiating with some success toward getting those who had been left outside within

the pale of the agreement, but in August it was thought time once more to take occasion by the hand, and so the usual formulas were given effect to. The offer made was: To men and women 18 years of age and over, 5s.; to boys and girls under 18, 2s. 6d. The Special General Meeting, held at Unity House, September 13th, 1918, passed this resolution:—

“ That having heard the report of the Executive Committee re negotiations on war wages this Special General Meeting decides to reject it. Further, we instruct the Executive Committee that we will not accept less than 10s. per week advance for all members of the N.U.R. employed on or in connection with the railways of Great Britain and Ireland who are 18 years of age and over, and 5s. per week advance for those under 18 years of age. That no settlement will be accepted which does not provide for equal war wage for female employées as males. That the agreement shall be retrospective from August 1st, 1918, and that we shall refuse to ratify any settlement that does not operate simultaneously for the whole of our members.”

The meeting was then adjourned, and the parties met again later. The findings were: Shopmen to have award simultaneously with the engineering trades, and the N.U.R. to appear in support of their claims. Women adults over 18 to have 5s. per week; those under, 2s. 6d. Men, 5s. per week; boys; 2s. 6d. The English, Irish, and Tube railways to be brought in simultaneously. The award to date as from Monday, September 24th, but to be retrospective on a flat rate as from August 5th. The Government also offered and strongly urged the acceptance of a joint committee, composed of equal representation from each side, with an independent chairman; such committee to have power to consider and determine the increase in the cost of food-stuffs as governed by the Board of Trade returns, when railway workers should be automatically increased in accordance with the percentage. The minimum to be on the basis of not less than 30s. in its relation to the figures of August, 1918, which would have allowed for each 10 per cent. increase, an advance of 2s. 9d. to those governed by the agreement. This was also rejected. The E.C. then interviewed the War Cabinet. After the report was presented a resolution was moved to declare a national strike, but this was defeated, and the amendment for acceptance was carried.

That it did not satisfy all would only be stating what always happens, but the South Wales men struck work, and it extended northwards to Shrewsbury and other places, and eastward to London. It probably arose through a misunderstanding of the real facts of the settlement; not that that was an excuse for the lack of discipline displayed. There was a clear gain of 5s., and the siding scale, which was in addition; so that when the price of foodstuffs went up by 10 per cent. there was an additional 2s. 9d., with the guarantee that if the prices came down they would not receive less than the 30s. war wage. It would seem that the strike fever was prevalent in the depots where the Associated were in the majority. The strike failed, as it was

bound to fail, first because it was sectional, and secondly because it was the acme of folly, and with a competent union to do its work it was not playing the game. It was, however, a blow to our General Secretary, who had for four years worked unremittently for his members, laboured in season and out of season, in the House of Commons had watched over their interests, in the negotiations had brought patience, skill, and untiring energy to the tasks confronting him; and now this bolt from the blue fell upon him. Had he been in vigorous health it would have been bad, but physically prostrate, as he was, and nearly blind, it was tragedy. With domestic cares sitting heavily upon him, with a physically weak system, he rose from his bed and went down and fought the malcontents, reasoned with them, threatened them. His deed caught the public imagination, they having had the facts placed before them, thought it might not be a triumph of persuasion, but might be a death. Anyway, "he went, he saw, he conquered." Was it any wonder, then, that himself ill, overstrung, disappointed, two of his children ill, and the nurse herself having to give up her task through illness, that he sat down and wrote the following letter with pain beyond description:—

" 26th September, 1918.

" To the President and Members of the Executive Committee.

" GENTLEMEN,—It is with a sad heart and with very great reluctance I feel compelled to give effect to the announcement I made at Cardiff to tender my resignation as General Secretary. I beg of you to believe me when I say that in taking this course it is not a hasty decision, but a course decided upon after very careful and anxious thought, and a decision rendered imperative by the circumstances of the past few days, which leave no other course open to me one who believes in constitutional government in Trade Unionism, who believes that the same standard of honour demanded from the other side is the least we are prepared to give ourselves. Moreover, whoever is responsible for the recent strike—a strike as wicked as it is dangerous—are people whose policy and methods must not only be challenged but fought, otherwise we shall soon reach a stage in this country similar to that which Russia is now passing through. Therefore, in taking this course, I do it as a challenge to such methods, and am prepared to bear all the consequences of my action. I cannot refrain from expressing to you, the President, and members of the E.C. my grateful thanks for the many acts of kindness and consideration I have received at your hands, and especially the magnificent help and assistance you have given me during the present crisis. I shall ever remember it.

" In taking farewell of my fellow members, to whose confidence and help I owe my present position, I can only express the hope that the society will continue to prosper, but that the members will realise that, having chosen their leaders, duty and honour demand that their advice should be followed.

" Yours fraternally,

" J. H. THOMAS."

It was not pity alone for Mr. Thomas but deep-seated anger that went against the strikers from the rest of the railway world. His deeds were on record. They themselves knew of it. Lads, women, and men knew that he had given of his best for them, and without in any way detracting from the splendid meritorious services of those about him, and who governed him and them. He had wrought, and he had won all along the line for them. He had won their affections. He had compelled their trust. The sincerity of his aims, the greatness of his tasks, the solid achievements gained were so apparent that from many a railway home anger and prayer mingled in irreligious discord at the deed they had done. It cannot be, it must not be, were the words, mingled with the fear that the decision might be final. Their only hope was that the physical strain had evoked it, and that returning health might heal the wound and bring him to them again. They resented, they pitied, they hoped, and hope won. The E.C. had taken steps to explain to the malcontents the true inwardness of the settlement, which was better than any that went before, because here were automatic adjustments, here was certainty, the prize was in their hands. At the Special General Meeting, Mr. Stapleton, of Sheffield, moved, and Mr. Beswick seconded, the following resolution:—

“That this Special General Meeting hear through the Press with extreme regret the contemplated resignation of our General Secretary, Bro. Thomas, but wholeheartedly ask him to reconsider the decision, realising that such action will not only have a demoralising influence on railway Trade Unionism, but from a Labour point of view would be a national disaster. We further desire to assure him of our unabated confidence in his integrity and ability, and regret and repudiate the circumstances impelling him to arrive at such a decision.”

After a long discussion, it was thought best not to carry it, and so the previous question was moved and carried, but although for tactical reasons it was not put it did express the feeling of the delegates assembled. Mr. Cramp, as President, sent out the following message:—

“I have received a large number of resolutions and communications from branches and individuals asking that every effort should be made to induce the General Secretary to reconsider his resignation. Time does not permit me to reply to all individually, but I desire to inform our members that everything is being done to carry their wishes into effect. Mr. Thomas’s physical condition is such that he cannot attend to business, and I hope he will see the necessity of taking a good rest. In the meantime, I am keeping in close touch with him and the Head Office, and I will see to it that the wishes of our members are placed before him in the most emphatic manner.

“Yours, etc.,

“C. T. CRAMP.”

Mr. Thomas took a rest, going to Bournemouth to repair the nervous exhaustion, and had to consult a specialist concerning the eye trouble. He was advised that a prolonged rest was the only cure for the shattered

nerves. He reconsidered his resignation, and it was announced at the next meeting of the E.C., when the consideration of the termination of the truce was considered, in order to give effect to the National Programme agreed to at Leicester. In the meantime peace, so long looked for, had come, and the burden that had weighted the heart of humanity for so long was lifted, and the joy that took hold of the nation was indescribable. There is only one Book that can put in a sentence that feeling: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good."

We have in this narrative been concerned with wages, but to confine the war period of our administrative efforts to that alone would be like dropping a pin in the Atlantic. Looking through those records of over four years the work of our governing body is a record of splendid performance. Our own union, working in its immediate sphere, is a land of wonder, and the work done by the Labour Party and ourselves in conjunction with them is more wonderful still. They were unceasingly vigilant. They took long views, and looked to the end of the war, whilst they dealt with war phases. One might think did we not know otherwise that both heart and mind were at leisure with themselves to consider problems, without racking nerves, sorrow and mourning through loss. They did their work nobly; they did it well, and now new efforts must come to rebuild a ruined world. So far as we are concerned, I can only draw shadowy forms, mere outlines of things.

The wages settlements were only the shell of many other things and all the while the ordinary affairs had to be dealt with, and so all these things can only be dealt with in faint, light strokes, leaving bare enough the great facts that lay behind them. It is possible to write in a line of something attempted, something done, but that one line may have meant weeks of anxiety and labour. There was the amended conciliation with elaborate findings, only to have it turned down at a Special General Meeting, and the gestation period had to begin again, and much labour was the result before finis could be written upon it. There were heroic efforts to keep the "Daily Citizen" alive, but, alas! it died of war pangs, and had others rendered the same financial tribute that we had it had possibilities of life. There were difficulties always with the Associated, illustrating the truth that two cannot walk together except they be agreed, and when its secretary died they had the hardihood to say that we were contributory causes. We worked together with the Labour Party, and sometimes in advance of them, to keep the hated word conscription out of our national annals, and none did better service than Mr. J. H. Thomas in this direction, and yet no one was more alive to national needs. The shopmen's questions and the surly exclusion of Mr. Thomas from the circle of negotiation was not creditable to the craft unions, and it appeared quite evident that the companies thought so too. We were capable negotiators and they had learnt to appreciate us, even though they could not stretch their hand quite so far as we wanted them to go. So also the Labour College during these years was a source of endless anxiety to all who had its well-being at

heart, but after innumerable difficulties, and when after we once had in our printed records "The Late Labour College," it rose Phoenix-like from the ashes and would not become "late," and the South Wales Miners and ourselves, after wading through endless difficulties, legal and otherwise, landed in port, and Mr. E. Edwards had a large share in the triumph. The Military Service Bills found us alert because they had dangers in them beyond conscription, and were capable of putting a weapon in the hands of those towards whom they disliked, and it did happen that way, but after negotiation a Joint Committee was set up composed equally of employers and employed. There was also the liability and legal decisions against responsibility for maiming or death from enemy hostile action by air and sea, and there we eventually triumphed, and this also shows the pertinacity of Mr. Thomas with the Board of Trade and in the Parliamentary arena. In all these things "the weariest river ran somewhere safe to sea."

We took the long view with regard to after-war emergencies, and had but our aims been furthered much of what afterwards happened might have been averted. With all this labour and heavy tension upon overwrought nerves there was the sorrow that lay about our paths because of many of our brave fellows going under, and like all other industries war laid a heavy tax upon us in sightless eyes, shorn limbs, and deaths, but we set our teeth and went on. Female labour keeps constantly cropping up in chronicles of the war period, but the sane view took shape, and we surmounted the difficulties one by one. There were also difficulties with the enlistment of our own staff, with more work to do, with less persons to do it, but here, again, difficulties were only made to be solved. We steered a straight course, ploughed a straight furrow. Old methods went into the melting-pot, we were in a new world, and there were sections who thought they could do the governing better than those constitutionally elected. The Irish office was also destroyed in the Irish rebellion. The sympathisers of their aims deserved better treatment, but even after that we still lived, and shall continue to do so, maybe in some reincarnation process. The illness of the General Secretary and Organiser J. Holmes in ordinary times, though it would always have evoked sympathy, would in other than war times not have been so hurtful. Even the question of the incidence of the income tax came within our purview, and we achieved that purpose and also raised the wage amount before being assessable, though, perhaps, some in their eagerness went further than that, not seeing that a direct tax is the surest and best tax in existence, because with indirect taxation you can "fool part of the people part of the time." The alien question made some extraordinary anomalies, and here, too, we placed effort and made success.

The term of Mr. A. Bellamy (President) having expired at the December meeting of the E.C., this resolution was placed on record: "That having regard to the fact that this is the last ordinary meeting of this E.C. at which Mr. Bellamy will preside during his present term of office, we desire to place on record our high appreciation of his services as President of the union, and that we hope he will long be spared to

continue his services to railwaymen and the Labour movement." It was a well-deserved tribute. He had been President during the time of fusion, he had been on innumerable sub-committees, conducted interviews during negotiations, and had put his heart into all the work he did; was capable, efficient, far-seeing, and conducted the body he presided over past many difficult corners.

We were sorry to part with him, because in all the trying periods he had become a household word among railwaymen. He had served his day and fulfilled right well his task; but "*Sic transit gloria mundi*," and only rule, the embodiment of the idea that any member should have the chance of rising to that high position made it a necessity. Glancing back at his presidential addresses, they are models of clearness, brevity, and good sense. In none of them is a mere whirl of words. He laid an unerring finger upon difficulties, dangers, and possibilities, and those which dealt with the realisation of high aims all along rose to the point of eloquence. Men come and men go, but the cause goes on for ever.

During September, 1916, the E.C. passed this resolution: "That this Committee having considered the resignation of Chief Goods Clerk Hewitt to take effect as from December 31st, 1916, desires to place on record our appreciation of his long and faithful service to the union, and decides to make him an allowance of £1 per week from January 1st, 1917, as a special pension, and trust he may have a happy and long-lived retirement." Alas! wishes for us cannot be facts; and he did not last long.

On April 12th, 1917, W. Hart, chief clerk of the Finance Department, died. He was careful and painstaking, somewhat secretive and conservative in his methods, and not excellent in making explanations, when such were required; but he was very capable. He joined the society at Wigan in 1886, and it was not long before he became Auditor, and later became a clerk, and with those characteristics which were part of him he fully equipped himself for that which he undertook. He learned shorthand, held the diploma of Fellow of the Central Association of Accountants and Associate of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries, and was methodical and painstaking. Both the Finance Committee and the E.C. gave expressions of regret at his loss.

At the quarterly meeting, December, 1918, the E.C. passed this: "That having considered the likely early retirement of Clerk Paul, and having regard to the fact that owing to age he has been deprived of the benefits of the Superannuation Fund, this E.C. decides that in view of his long and faithful service to the union we grant him an allowance of £2 per week from Special Pension Fund, to take effect from the date of his retirement."

He did not retire till some little time after. He had gained the esteem of all with whom he came in contact, and was affectionately described as "Father Paul." He was humorous, encyclopædic, a master of good-natured repartee, which never failed him, and there was a rumour that he was able to cast up a pence and shilling column

at one and the same time. He is still living at the time of writing, and is as youthful in his outlook and sportive frolicsomeness as in the days of his far-off youth. Faithful servants we have had, but never any more faithful. His only physical infirmity is his deafness.

E. Charles also went to his long home. He was an untiring worker for labour, was resourceful and painstaking. He was chosen as secretary of the Conciliation Boards of South Wales. In all his work he did it well, except perhaps his year of Presidency, when he was not a success. He was worthy of the memorial proposed, and which the E.C. only turned down to avoid invidious distinctions.

If we may look back awhile whilst on the personal, it was on August 21st that Councillor John Dobson reached his Golden Wedding, when he and his wife, whom he led to the altar at the Mexborough Wesleyan Church, in August, 1865, was presented with things of beauty and comfort; and now in his old age and retirement he rests in one of them. Later he was presented with a testimonial from those who loved and honoured him. Only he and Mr. Thomas have reached the dignity of a printed "Life."

The days sped and peace of a sort came, and all the prognostications of Labour were fulfilled. At the A.G.M. at Edinburgh, 1918, the new President, Mr. C. Cramp, had dealt with many war phases as they applied to the workers generally and to railwaymen in particular, and in conclusion said :—

" At each Annual Meeting we trust that it may be the last to be held amid the atmosphere of war. So many of our friends and comrades, so much of our young and virile manhood, has been consumed in the great furnace of war, so many of our fairest visions have been shattered for the time, that we are sick at heart with all the pain and sadness of the world.

" We seem to be descending into the twilight of civilisation and relapsing into the stage of barbarism, yet I believe that even this great tragedy will bring some compensation. If those lessons which are now writ large for all to read are but remembered by my class; if the importance and potential dignity of their own lives are but clearly revealed to them during this dark hour of crisis; if the poverty and sham and false pretence of our pre-war life be plainly exposed, then I believe the great sacrifices already made will not have been wholly in vain.

" It may be that we shall emerge into a saner and cleaner civilisation, free from the paradox of great wealth on the one hand and abject poverty on the other. It may be that we shall establish a real democracy, not only at the ballot box, but in the workshop. It may be that the greatness of this nation shall not hereafter be measured by the extent of its fleets and armies, or the number and magnificence of its stately buildings, but by the general level of the intelligence and well-being of all its people. I pray that a nobler race may arise from the ruins of this great conflict, strong in body, lofty in spirit, high in intelligence,

conscious of the dignity of their own lives, respecting only that which is worthy of respect, bowing down to none."

In a few months the looked-for peace came. In the 1916 Report Mr. Williams had said: "When the time comes for the settlement of this great world struggle, let us hope it will be commensurate with the great sacrifice of blood and treasure; above all, that it will be a settlement ensuring a lasting peace." Hopes are dust. At the conclusion of the 1917 Report, Mr. Thomas said:—

"I must congratulate the officers and members, both collectively and individually, upon the magnificent progress of our union, which has resulted in the happy, and indeed, enviable, distinction of enabling us to claim to be the largest single Trade Union in the world. However, whilst congratulating ourselves on the progress already made, we must recognise that the goal of our ambition is to be able to speak for, and in the name of, every employé on the railways of the United Kingdom. Just in proportion to our development shall we succeed in gaining for all railway workers those conditions which are long overdue. I fully recognise that, whilst this report shows marked progress in the finances and numerical strength of our union, it does not convey all to the average member. He judges, and quite rightly, the success obtained in improving his economic position, and in this connection I may point with pride to the fact that no union has been more successful than ours. Without once having to threaten or attempt a stoppage of work we have succeeded in improving the conditions of our members, at the same time keeping clearly in mind our great responsibility, as a transport industry, to the nation which has been engaged for the past four years in a life and death struggle. We can point with pride to the fact that over 100,000 of our brothers are at present serving in either the Army or Navy, and unfortunately the great sacrifice has been made by some thousands, whilst large numbers have also been disabled. It must be kept clearly in mind that when the men return to civil life their position must not be worse than when they went away. We must see that those who have been disabled shall not be used to reduce the economic standard. Pensions and gratuities must not be taken into consideration in fixing conditions of service. Pensions must be recognised as a right and not a charity for services rendered.

"I had hopes that before being called upon to issue this report we should have had a peace that would commensurate with the sacrifices made. No peace will be satisfactory that does not free the world from the curse of militarism, and towards that end Labour can play a great part. Great as have been the sacrifices on the battlefield, magnificent as has been the valour of our troops, I am thoroughly convinced that these must be supplemented by the efforts of those of us at home to see that they have not been in vain. No one desires a German peace; no one wants a peace that will leave the germs of another war. If that danger is to be averted the peace must be one made and approved of by the people. We can all play our part to bring this about. Mere numbers avail nothing, and unless our members are imbued with the

true principles of democracy and brotherhood we can never hope to achieve the success for which we have laboured so long.

“That our union will play a great part in moulding the future of this country I have no doubt; but let us each in our respective spheres realise our individual and moral responsibility to work for the time when war shall be no more and men and women will be able to concentrate on those things that make life worth living.”

This is how he ended 1918, and the contrasted hopes uttered and unrealised are mirrored in the following:—

“It is gratifying to report that the union is increasing in its usual manner in membership, funds, and prestige, and in all of these our position was never stronger than it is to-day. We are at a stage when we are a real power in the country, and the name of the N.U.R. is a household one synonymous with successful Trade Unionism. In organisation, we have yet to reach the summit of our ambition, and this can only be obtained by the other two railway unions amalgamating with us—may 1919 achieve it! Our close on half-a-million members will appreciate that this mighty force for the upliftment of our class has only been built up by energy, patience, tact, and self-sacrifice, and to nobody is more credit due than to the hard-working officials of our branches. To them all in the name of the union I return thanks.

“Since my 1917 report an Armistice, which all yearned for, has come. Peace is now in sight, and here I take the opportunity of welcoming back those of our comrades who have returned. In this report I said: “No peace will be satisfactory that does not free the world from the curse of militarism, and towards that end Labour can play a great part. Great as have been the sacrifices on the battlefield, magnificent as has been the valour of our troops, I am thoroughly convinced that these must be supplemented by the efforts of those at home to see that they have not been in vain. No one desires a German peace; no one wants a peace that will leave the germs of another war. If that danger is to be averted the peace must be one made and approved of by the people.”

“It was a sense of foreboding that compelled me to write in this strain, and I am sorry to say that what I feared has come to pass. Those who fought and toiled and suffered to free the country from the octopus of militarism find themselves committed to supplying armies of occupation in Germany for years to come, and to being dragged into a dastardly war against Russia.

“A peace ‘which passeth all understanding’ is being imposed by starvation on 140,000,000 people; what else can be expected when but the shadow of President Wilson’s Fourteen Points has been attained?

“His declaration that ‘all well-defined national aspirations shall be accorded the utmost satisfaction that can be accorded them without introducing new or perpetuating old elements of discord and antagonism that would be likely in time to wreck the peace of Europe, and consequently of the world,’ has been largely nullified by terms which are but the seeds of future wars.

"The Labour Party in Parliament and in the country has consistently set its face against an unjust Peace and Conscription. Both leave much to be desired. Conscription is with us till April, 1920, although the Prime Minister wrote during the December election, in reply to a charge that a 'Vote for the Coalition is a vote for conscription,' that 'it is not only not true, but it is a calculated and characteristic falsehood.' Whether the reply was calculated and characteristic is debatable, but its value and reliability can be assessed at its true worth.

"The whole point is this, be we ever so strong on the industrial field we achieve but little unless we are strong on the political field also. Of what use is it to war against the capitalist and his first cousin the profiteer on the industrial field if we send both to the House of Commons to legislate in their own interest as against ours?

"Can one conceive a Labour Government countenancing a Russian expedition?

"I am confident that the next election will see the Labour Party more strongly represented at Westminster, and I would appeal to all those who desire a brighter and happier homeland to use every effort for Labour's success, both industrially and politically.

"Our lives are what we choose to make them. Were we but conscious of our powers, and did we but intelligently use them, there would be no limit to our achievements. Loose thinking and a blind adoption of others' thoughts, a callous disregard of wrongs that need righting, and a too general acceptance of things as we find them are responsible for our position in the world of Labour to-day.

"Let us concentrate and work for the day when wars and the horrors of wars are nightmares of the past, and those who labour the wide world over shall be those to enjoy to the full the fruits of their own handiwork."

The above is history not written long years after, but at the time, and expresses the feelings of the time. So we leave the war behind us and look into the future of the next three years, which completes our Jubilee.

Chapter XXIV.

LABOUR PARLIAMENTARY DEFEAT—THE “DEFINITIVE” STRIKE.

AT the end of 1918 David Lloyd George, Premier of Great Britain, having “won the war” sought to win a Parliamentary Election triumph, and he did. He had boasted that he knew something of “political strategy,” and never did he speak more truthfully. The majority of the two great parties coalesced, and the Liberals, who remained such, without the Coalition tags, and the Labour Party, who stood for Labour ideals, were simply snowed under. “Make Germany Pay!” “Hang the Kaiser!” were, with the addition of having won the war, the election cries, with the result that Mr. George won, and all the rest, with a few notable exceptions, were snowed under. We emerged with two of our members successful: Waterson, at Kettering, who stood for Co-operation and Labour, and J. H. Thomas, at Derby, one of the most enlightened constituencies in the United Kingdom, and which has for half-a-century been our best friend politically. The figures for Derby were:—

J. H. Thomas	25,145
Green (Ind. U.)	14,920
Rowbotham (L)	13,408
Smith	13,012

Our capable Mr. Bellamy, who had been President for many years, and who rendered such good service in all negotiations during the strike and during the stress of war, also in parley with the Associated, as well as the fusion success which preceded that, was among the victims. Bailey, Manager of the Approved Section of the N.U.R., J. R. Bell, A. J. Williams, W. Halls, J. Bermingham, W. Carter, I. Brassington (Organisers), C. Cramp, T. Lowth, Willet Ball (Editor of the “Railway Review”), Palin (once an active member of our union, and now of the Vehicle Workers), Hudson, Bateman, Chilton, Pargiter, Burgess, Morris, Letts, and Harris, all of ours, were among the slain. Five of the Railway Clerks’ Association and Bromley, of the Associated, also shared in the defeat.

The election was without any standard of comparison with previous ones. Women voted, many soldiers were still away in foreign climes, and confusion of principles was never so abundant. Evans, the secretary of the property owners, told his class that their interests lay with the Coalition; the profiteers held on to their skirts, and nearly all the interests of wealth were among the victors. Political stars who would not subscribe to the prevailing view fell. Never was an

election so profuse in promises by the victors. A new heaven and earth would soon slide into view if they were returned, and now at the end of our society's Jubilee we are still awaiting those two new spheres. Both education and freedom are plants of very slow growth; but here they withered. But our protagonists never once lowered the flag. They fought and lost the election, nothing else. The prophets gave the Coalition Parliament a short life, but they are still living at the time of writing this. Our General Secretary said of this on January 16th, 1922, "There is a row in the camp," and maybe the worker will soon be coming into his own. Germany has not paid, and the Kaiser is not hanged, and unemployment and untold misery is rife. Thomas, whose strength and nerves had been heavily drawn upon for many years, again broke down after the election. Witnessing the ardour of that Derby campaign, I did not wonder.

For the next two years or more the activity, owing to the multiplicity of questions that arose and lay about our path in such profusion, was more pronounced than at any period in our history. Sub-Committees of the Executive were set up on nearly every point, and the Committees or the Executive sat almost continuously; so much so that at a later stage, when finance had to be a consideration, this matter had also to be included. The headings of the subject dealt with, subsidiary and main, would in themselves form a large chapter. Taking the backward view, as we now do, and the vast range of subjects dealt with, it must have been a great physical strain upon our officials, and it is little wonder that Thomas again and again broke down. The mind could not be at leisure with itself to give the necessary thought to work out a solution to all the problems with the care that the subject and human nature demanded. It was not a summer's holiday, and the thought keeps finding expression as we view the cumulative findings that perhaps the E.C. might have done better, and more, by doing less, but that thought is due to standing in the calmer atmosphere of a distant period, with the excitement of that period shed by a later time, and there may be an unjust judgment in the suspicion. They were charged with great tasks, and had to live in the atmosphere of the day, and a longer view at a more distant time may give unstinted praise. There certainly was not failure for lack of action. The shops question gave endless trouble. The industrial ideal is good, but in working it out sectional forms, incompatibility with general railway life made itself apparent, and the craft officials stood looking on with a scowl upon their features, and lay in wait to put sprags in the coach wheels.

The forty-seven-hour week had been decided upon with reference to the engineering trade, and we had negotiations with the Railway Executive, the President of the Board of Trade, and the Government. The President of the Board of Trade had assured us that the railway shopmen would come under the engineering agreement, but the application of it fell short. And so resolutions abounded from branches wherein was the shop element. At Grimsby a dispute arose owing to the application of the forty-seven-hour week without half-an-hour for breakfast.

Three local firms declined to discuss the question and locked out their employés; and other firms ceased work in sympathy. It affected 5,000 men, including the steamship depot of the Great Central Railway and miscellaneous grades in the engineer's department; and the railway members of the N.U.R. took part in the sympathetic strike. Efforts were made to call out the clerical and traffic staff, but they were a failure. A strike also took place at the Brighton works. If these disputes had had a common aim on a single policy the path would have been smoother. The divergent views were the outstanding difficulty; and so it had to lead to walking warily, and was often a hand-to-mouth policy. And what could the E.C. do but either condemn the division or decide, as they did, that local ideas should govern policy, where it was not in conflict with the main one.

The shopmen in various districts wanted to know why the ripe fruit was not in their hands, and they, with those who asked for the fulfilment of the National Programme, had to be counselled to wait, as things were moving as fast as they could well move, and that a Special General Meeting was just ahead. The E.C. went on with the National Programme, making decisions for the application of its principles with the Railway Executive and the President of the Board of Trade, and to stay the manifest restiveness, also protested against the delays and the assurance of the President of the Board of Trade—which did not mature—that the shopmen would come under the engineers' agreement. One of the applications of the principles in the National Programme was the everyday working of an eight-hour day, and the fulfilment of the main pledges towards which the other fellows across the way had taken no effective steps, and they wanted no breaks in the time worked and no deductions for meal times. So tardy were the movements of the opposite camps that they affirmed "they would not tolerate any further delay," wanted an interview at once, protesting against Government indifference, opining that these things were urgent and would not wait, but in the meantime they formed their sub-committee on the separate question of loco., traffic, goods, permanent-way, and supervisory, making specific regulations as to the methods of working the hours, periods of grace, piecework, and how Saturday should operate in relation to the other five days. These are the reports of the Sub-Committees:—

“ APPLICATION OF THE EIGHT-HOUR DAY.

“ LOCO. SUB-COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

“ GENTLEMEN,—Having considered the question of the application of the eight-hour day to the men employed in the locomotive department on all railways in the country, we recommend as follows:—

“ 1. That all men employed on work that is continuous for the whole 24 hours shall have three shifts of eight hours each, and arrangements be made for meal time to be included in the eight hours.

“ 2. That where men have been enjoying an early finish on Saturday, arrangements be made for them to continue this practice.

“ 3. That all men employed on piecework shall have a proportionate increase in piece rates to compensate them for loss of wages through the shorter working day.

“ (Signed) R. ROBSON.
A. J. BAYNE.
A. LAW.
W. T. GRIFFITHS.
C. HARRIS.
H. C. CHARLETON.

“ TRAFFIC SUB-COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

“ GENTLEMEN,—Having considered the application of the eight-hour day to workers employed in the various traffic grades, we define the position as follows :—

“ 1. That where work proceeds continuously, the period of twenty-four hours be divided into three equal parts of eight hours each.

“ 2. That any food arrangement made be included in the eight-hour working day.

“ 3. That where work does not proceed during the whole period of twenty-four hours, the hours shall be eight continuous hours from signing on to signing off duty with a food interval included.

“ 4. That all time worked in excess of eight hours be paid for at overtime rate.

“ (Signed) A. J. NIVEN. E. G. ANDERSON.
W. BANCROFT. G. MASON.
D. RITSON. C. A. HENDERSON.

“ GOODS SUB-COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

“ GENTLEMEN,—In accordance with your instructions, the goods section of this committee have given careful consideration to the application of the forty-eight-hour week and eight-hour day, and they desire to make the following recommendations :—

“ 1. That the hours of duty be so arranged as to provide for a working week of five shifts of equal length with a short shift on Saturday.

“ 2. That reasonable opportunity be allowed for meal times, but no deductions be made for such intervals.

“ 3. That no member shall be required to book on more than once for one shift of duty.

“ 4. That overtime be paid on the basis of forty-eight hours, each day to stand by itself.

“ (Signed) J. WILSON. P. MURPHY.
C. J. EDWARDS. A. MATTHEW.
W. J. HILL. C. J. STARLING.

"PERMANENTWAY AND SHOPS SUB-COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

"GENTLEMEN,—In accordance with your instructions, the engineering and permanentway section of this committee have given careful consideration to the suggestions for the working of a forty-seven-hour week, and we desire to make the following recommendations :—

"1. That as the system of working hours differs in various parts of the country, a demand be made that the method of working the forty-seven hours shall be decided locally by the whole of the men concerned.

"2. That there be a period of 15 minutes grace allowed, if necessary, at the starting time, with the corresponding loss of pay.

"3. That piecework prices be increased to meet the loss of seven hours work during the week.

"4. That in order to preserve the short day worked by all men in the permanentway on Saturdays, we recommend that these grades work eight and a-half hours per day from Monday to Friday inclusive, overtime on these days to be calculated on all time worked after the eight and a-half hours. Five and a-half hours to be worked on Saturdays, overtime being calculated on all time worked after the five and a-half hours.

"The above hours to include meal times.

"(Signed)	J. JACKSON.	W. GORDON.
	W. FAIRLESS.	E. BROWNING.
	DAN THOMAS.	W. H. FARMER."

The National Agreement for an eight-hour day was, however, signed on January 30th, 1919, the terms of which were in the following document :—

"With the view to dealing with questions which have arisen in regard to the introduction on railways of the principle of an eight-hour day (or forty-eight per week) and of removing misunderstandings in the minds of some of the men, a meeting was held on the 30th inst. at the Board of Trade. Sir Albert Stanley presided, and the following agreement was come to and signed by the President, Sir Herbert Walker (on behalf of the Railway Executive) and Mr. Walter Hudson (acting as General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen) :—

"The principle of the eight-hour day for railwaymen is to be given effect to as from February 1st on the basis of the existing conditions of service, and where it is not found practicable to reduce the working hours to eight overtime will be paid for after the expiration of eight working hours.

"In calculating the eight hours, time allotted for meals will not be counted where time has hitherto been so allotted. For example: (1) A man hitherto booked on at 6 o'clock and working continuously until 4 will, if booked on at 6, cease working at 2, or if he works later will be paid at overtime rate from 2. (2) A man hitherto booked on at 6 o'clock and working till 5, with a meal hour between, say, 12 to 1, will, if booked on at 6, cease working at 3 (with an hour's meal interval) or, if he works later, will be paid overtime rate

from 3. (3) Where a man's work has been arranged on a weekly basis, overtime will be paid after forty-eight hours' work, and as regards allotted meal times, the principle set out in Example (2) will apply, *i.e.*, allotted meal times will not be counted in calculating working hours. The above is without prejudice to the right of either side to claim different arrangements in the negotiations now pending.

“(Signed)

“ A. H. STANLEY,
President of the Board of Trade.

H. WALKER,
Acting Chairman, Railway Executive Committee.

WALTER HUDSON,
Acting General Secretary, National Union of Railwaymen.”

A meeting was also held with the Associated, and a similar agreement was signed by Mr. J. Bromley.

This was another stage in the onward march of Labour.

The ink on the settlement was not dry before a strike took place on the Tube Railways. The motormen's conditions in the agreement with the companies were: that the working day should constitute nine hours, split terms excepted, inclusive of at least thirty minutes' relief for meals, with a maximum of fifteen minutes in excess of the nine hours; each day to stand by itself; no turn of duty to exceed five hours without relief. In arranging the eight-hour day the officials decided to cut out the meal time, and that it should not consist of the working day, which the men contended was a breach of the agreement. With the speeding-up system there was not the opportunity to snatch a meal. The Lotts Road Power House also withdrew their labour; so that the Metropolitan District was closed as well as the Tubes. The Board of Trade issued a statement in which they said that in August, 1917, the railway employes made a demand for an eight-hour day, when the Government promised that it should be sympathetically considered immediately after the hostilities, which had then been conceded; that time was allotted for meals exclusive of the eight hours. Notwithstanding this agreement entered into with the responsible unions and the Railway Executive, the Underground men and the electric workers of the L.B. & S.C. had struck, and the men's proposal might mean six and a-half hours. Mr. Hudson, who was Acting General Secretary, in the absence of Mr. Thomas, who was away on the Continent, issued the following appeal:—

“ Regarding the regrettable unauthorised strike on the part of the London Tubes, I have to say that we are in danger of the negotiations being held up by the rash action on the part of the men. Honest attempts have been made to tide over the difficulty of the application of the eight-hour decision between the 1st of February and the entering upon the negotiations with regard to meal times, and generally as to how the eight hours are to be applied without any prejudice whatever to

men from either side, indeed the Electric Railway Company have handed to the men an agreement as follows :—

“ ‘ If the employés remain loyally at work on the question of payment for meal relief being decided by the Negotiating Committee and the railway Trade Unions at a meeting which should be held on the 12th inst., the Underground Railway management agree to make such decision retrospective to the 1st inst.’

“ This ensures their claim being considered without prejudice. This was an assurance it was reasonably expected the men would take and act upon under the circumstances, being assured they would not lose anything as the result of waiting a week or ten days for the negotiations. My advice to the men is to resume their work and take the advice of the E.C. with regard to any future action that might be necessary in connection with the questions involved in the National Programme. So far as our members are concerned, under no circumstances must they even contemplate any action, as these local actions are only frittering away their strength and hindering the progress of a general settlement.”

The strike lasted from the 3rd of February till the 8th, when the men returned to work. There seemed to be an air of mystery about the strike, which caused great public inconvenience by the weather conditions, but the men evidently thought they were standing for an agreement which was being impinged upon. The findings of the Executive of the union were in marked contrast to the statement of Mr. Hudson; indeed, the whole proceedings from start to finish were a bungle and something in the nature of a fiasco. They wired for the return of the General Secretary and President, because “ we have no permanent official in the office who has any knowledge of the situation or information to give to this Committee.”

The wonder is also why this was passed: “ That in view of the serious crisis in the industrial world and the trouble likely to arise in the application of the eight-hour day, also owing to the close proximity of the national negotiations and the necessity of preparing for the same, this Committee is of opinion it should have been summoned earlier.”

This was on February 6th, but what the crisis in the industrial world, and the anticipation that there would be trouble when the time for negotiations arrived, had to do with it is as big a mystery as the strike itself. In any case they were anticipating trouble, for which there was no need, and the cry for the General Secretary and President make it appear that they were quite helpless and the case hopeless without the strong guiding hand of the General Secretary, and deeper still do we dip into wonder when they passed a resolution justifying the deed, as follows :—

“ That having considered the whole of the circumstances connected with the strike of the London Tube workers, this Committee are strongly of the opinion that our members who are on strike as a consequence of the violation of their conditions of service by the managements of

the railways concerned are justified in the action they have taken, and decide forthwith to recognise the strike."

This they conveyed to the men through the branch secretaries. The only need in the matter was patience and negotiation. The following resolution was sent to the President of the Board of Trade:—

"That having considered the position taken up by the Government on the application of the eight-hour day, this Committee instructs the General Secretary to inform the President of the Board of Trade of the great dissatisfaction felt by this Committee at the apathy of the Government, and their apparent disregard of the feelings of the men throughout the country occasioned by the ill-conceived plans of the Railway Executive Committee in applying the eight-hour day, and, as pointed out by this Executive Committee to Sir Albert Stanley and Sir H. A. Walker at our conference on Thursday, this is the cause of the strike on the London Tube Railways. Further, as the Government have not offered terms of settlement that can be accepted by this Executive Committee in connection with that dispute, we advise him of our desire for a further conference to-day with a view to arriving at a settlement."

The Associated on February 4th sent out the letter as under:—

**"ASSOCIATED SOCIETY OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS
AND FIREMEN.**

"Issued from—

"Imperial Hotel, Russell Square, London,

"February 4th, 1919.

"FELLOW MEMBERS,—Your Executive Committee are in London dealing with the strike on the London Electric Railways and electrified sections of certain steam railways running into London, and desire to give you a brief explanation of the position and to ask you to prepare with all possible dispatch for an official call to strike in support of our members in the London district.

"The position is this. You will remember that the eight-hour agreement provided only for the reduction of hours to eight per day; all other conditions of service and wage rates to remain as hitherto pending the setting up of a committee to deal with same. This agreement was discussed by your Executive with the Railway Executive on January 7th and with Sir Albert Stanley at the Board of Trade on January 15th, and its provisions clearly and mutually understood, *i.e.*, that where meal times had been allotted outside the hours of the working day without pay, chiefly affecting shedmen and cleaners, such should remain outside the eight-hour day until other conditions were dealt with, and that brief meal reliefs on electric trains and brief stoppages of shunting engines for meals which had hitherto been paid for within the working day should still operate pending fuller negotiations.

"It was also agreed that overtime rates should be paid after an eight-hour day or forty-eight-hour week, as the case may be.

Nothing further was heard of this until Thursday, January 30th, when your President and myself were informed at the Board of Trade that certain other grades were asking that allotted meal hours, which had not previously been paid for, should be included in the eight-hour day, with pay, and that an agreement had that day been come to with the N.U.R. laying it down that such allotted meal times would not be paid for, and we were asked to sign a similar understanding. This we agreed to do, it being clearly understood that this did not apply where meal relief or stoppages had previously been paid for within the hours of the working day.

"Several companies had made arrangements to bring in the eight-hour day, making similar provisions for meal time reliefs or stoppages and overtime rates, but Sir Herbert Walker has now refused to permit such companies to do so, and has definitely instructed all companies that any time allowed must in future be outside the eight-hour day and not be paid for. He is also refusing to recognise overtime rates, time and a-quarter; and, in fact, has committed a grave breach of faith, gone back on his own word, and even denied making certain statements to your Executive with regard thereto. Also refusing to allow mileage rates to be paid in proportion to the eight-hour day, as agreed to with Sir Albert Stanley.

"Your Executive, therefore, had no alternative but to support our London members who are on strike, with the full power of the organisation, and have at once called out our members on the District Railway, and are calling out our members on the L. B. & S. C. R. and L. & S. W. R., and ask our members on all other railways to make preparations for an immediate strike within the next few days on receiving an E.C. instruction.

"Be ready for such call. Victory is assured.

"Yours fraternally,

"J. BROMLEY, General Secretary."

On the 7th we sent out the following:—

"STRIKE ON THE LONDON ELECTRIC RAILWAYS.

"Unity House, Euston Road, London, N.W. 1,

"February 7th, 1919.

"To the Branch Secretaries.

"DEAR SIRS,—The conditions of service since 1912 of the men on the London Electric Railways provide for a meal relief of not less than thirty minutes, which is paid for.

"In consequence of the Underground Railway Company not including this meal relief allowance in the arrangements for working the eight-hour day, pending the national negotiations, there is a strike of their employés, which commenced on Monday morning last.

"Our Executive Committee met on Thursday morning and opened up negotiations with the Board of Trade during the course

of the day. Offers made by the Board of Trade for the Government were not acceptable to our Executive Committee, consequently negotiations were suspended last night. Between that time and this morning we have been informed that the Associated Society have arrived at the following agreement with the Government :—

“ ‘ The Underground trainmen to be booked on for eight hours’ work. Meal time will not be included in the eight hours ; but in the new conditions of the eight-hour day the companies will offer all reasonable facilities to meet the ordinary physical needs of the men.

“ ‘ (Signed) A. H. STANLEY.
 J. BROMLEY.’

“ I am instructed to inform you that our Executive Committee have authorised the strike on the London Electric Railways and will give all the necessary support ; but it is to be clearly understood that branches and members outside the London area are not to be included in this strike unless further instructions are issued from this office. It follows, therefore, that the strike is to be confined entirely to the London Electric Railways, and our members throughout the country must not take any action without further instructions.

“ For your information, I may say that the negotiations on the national programme commence early next week.

“ Yours faithfully,

“ WALTER HUDSON, Acting General Secretary.”

So that whilst the Associated declared the strike off, the N.U.R. declared it on.

Early on Saturday morning it was announced that a way out of the difficulty had been discovered in the manner set out in the following copy of document :—

“ METROPOLITAN DISTRICT RAILWAY, LONDON ELECTRIC RAILWAY, CENTRAL LONDON RAILWAY, CITY AND SOUTH LONDON RAILWAY.

“ Electric Railway House,

Westminster Broadway, S.W. 1,

“ 8th February, 1919.

“ DEAR SIR,—We understand that the Underground trainmen are to be booked on for eight hours’ work. Meal times are not to be included in the eight-hour day, but the companies are to offer all reasonable facilities to meet the ordinary physical needs of the men.

“ It will be impossible to arrange the duty sheets in our railways for several days, but this should not be allowed to delay the restarting of the services. I, therefore, suggest that a man should be nominated for each railway who would co-operate with the companies to assist in seeing to the proper carrying out of the arrangements for securing reasonable facilities to meet the ordinary physical

needs of the men, which facilities are to be included in the eight-hour day.

"It is, therefore, desirable that you should arrange to select these men for that purpose. I am willing that the company should pay them for their services until the duty sheets are finally established. This arrangement is without prejudice to the negotiations which are about to take place between the Railway Executive Committee and your union.

"Yours faithfully,

"(Signed) H. E. BLAIN, Operating Manager.

"Walter Hudson, Esq., National Union of Railwaymen."

It was an electric dispute, but the air was also electrical, and a meeting had been arranged for the Sunday at the Euston Theatre. Mr. Thomas, having returned from Berne, spoke at it, and the public, who were interested in the dispute more than in an ordinary one, mingled with the railway crowd. Mr. Thomas, it was well known, was against what had taken place. How would he deal with it, and how would he handle the dissentients, the public asked. Amid excitement and interruptions he handled that crowd as he had handled but few others in his mastery over men.

"Mr. Thomas said it was right for them to make up their minds on the situation, but they should not be led away by mere claptrap sentiment or appeals to passion. A circular had been distributed objecting to his raising the matter of the railways in the House of Commons on the Tuesday on the ground that it was a reactionary House. It was a reactionary House, but whose fault was it? The House was the reflex of their intelligence.

"It is madness, he said, to try to do by industrial action what your intelligence should have told you to do at the ballot box. I am going, as far as possible, to try to keep the movement on the right lines. You want a strong, virile, united Trade Union movement, and in the House you want a strong, free, unfettered, and uncompromised Labour Party. You want both to work as parts of one machine for the emancipation of the working classes.

"Never was there a time when there was so much discontent, ill-feeling, and dissatisfaction without anyone really knowing exactly what it is all about. I believe that the cause is the inevitable reaction after four years of war strain and suffering. People may tell you, or assume, that there is an unlimited amount of wealth locked up somewhere, of which some people have the key. They say that if the key can be obtained all will be well. But they are leading you in a false path. The real facts are that the only wealth is that which we all produce. If we do not keep that in mind we are going headlong for disaster.

"Our union is the strongest in the country. We can demand that unless such and such a thing is done, we can paralyse the community. That is our power. I want to examine what is our duty in relation to that power. However strong and powerful we may be, the State is more powerful and more important. Citizenship has a stronger claim

than any sectional interest. We as Trade Unionists have got to keep clearly in mind that we have to make our sectional claims consistent with and part of our duty as citizens of the State. The unfortunate tendency to-day is to assume that we can hold the State up to ransom at any time. We may succeed and achieve our object, but if we did it at the expense of the State, then as citizens we would have destroyed all our claim to citizenship.

“ When I signed the eight-hour agreement I had in mind, I always advocated, and I never disguised the fact, that I did not want the eight-hour day for the purpose of enabling you to work overtime. It would be unreasonable to pretend that under some circumstances there will not be overtime. But an eight-hour day will enable you to get family life in decency and comfort.”

He went on to say that agreements were often spoilt by the spirit in which they were interpreted, and that we might ruin ourselves by spasmodic outbursts. He wanted agreements carried out in letter and spirit; that the day had gone by when they could issue a notice and think all well. He said it would have been much easier, better, and much more commonsense if they had called the men together and said : “ Let us discuss this proposition to see if we can get a reasonable interpretation.” Many of the disputes of the day were caused primarily because employers did not recognise that workers were not now content to be mere hewers of wood and drawers of water. They would demand and insist upon a voice in the things that affected their daily life. On the question of meal times he said that the commonsense interpretation of the agreement was that existing things should continue, the only difference being the reduction of the working hours agreed upon. It was in that direction they were directing their efforts.

He may have had in mind another organisation when he said : “ You will be told that the only way to force the situation is to give some sort of ultimatum.” He was going to challenge the Government in the House and remind them they were returned to power because they promised a new England. His job was to hold them to their promise, to redeem their pledge, and if the union failed, then they must apply their own remedy. They would be disloyal to their union if before Parliament met or had a chance they said : “ We demand this in a few hours or days.” He went on to say that there were two dangers, the reactionaries, who believed they were born to govern, that they must enjoy the best of life, and what was left was good enough for others, and those who believed we could revolutionise by industrial trouble, or introduce what was called the “ Russian method ” in this country. He continued : “ I am bitterly opposed to the one as to the other, because I believe both are dangerous. Both must be fought, as both are against the best interests of the working classes. That is why I come to plead with you, and, through you, with all railwaymen in the country, not to take the law into your own hands. If the Executive fail to do their duty, if I have broken my trust—sack us, but always remember that

the essence of democracy is at least to be loyal to those whom you have put in authority. Any other way will lead to disaster."

He pleaded for loyalty and patience, avoiding precipitate and ill-advised action, as he wanted them to travel on the right road. There were two opinions at that time, whether our E.C. was wise, and whether we were dragged at the chariot wheels of the Associated. It must be left there. But, as always, because no great failure can be attributed to Thomas up to now, he plucked success out of the jaws of disaster. It was not always that he was brave—he was that, not that he was a leader, he was that—but he had the tactical sense, and he saw the end of the road he had to travel in difficult encounters. He surveyed the field and won, and had imagination enough to conceive what the "other fellow was doing over the hill," and to profit even by the mistakes of others, in a word spoken, a deed done, or failure in tactics. When pleading was wanted he pleaded; if the need was to create terror, well, he did that. But all leaders must be sparing in bluff, and here he was very sparing. He brought grist to the men's mill, and so they trusted him, even when they might disagree with his view.

The Negotiating Committee who interviewed the Railway Executive on the national programme found themselves up against a difficulty, because there were two programmes put forward for locomotivemen, and the Railway Executive asked for one—a very reasonable request—so they invited the Executive of the Associated, in the interests of the locomen, to meet them and beat their music out, which they did, and agreed to a long series of clauses and referred the others back for reconsideration. The two bodies could not agree, but they passed the following: "Having considered the report of the Loco. Sub-Committee respecting their negotiations with the A.S.L.E. & F., this E.C. decide to accept the same, believing that the attitude taken up by our representatives to be the correct one; and while regretting that no agreement could be arrived at, we decide to adhere to our original proposals."

After further negotiations a Special General Meeting was called, which met at Unity House on March 14th, 1919, and side by side was given the National Programme and the offer of the companies. Resolutions were passed informing the Railway Executive that no settlement would be accepted which did not cover all the members, without interference from any outside body, and with regard to the negotiations which had taken place expressed their "utmost dissatisfaction and disgust at the parsimonious manner in which the Railway Executive had dealt with the same since the programme was first presented." And further: "We refuse to compromise upon the national programme, which is the carefully considered irreducible minimum, and we therefore instruct our E.C. to convey this decision to the Railway Executive and the Government, and emphasise our determination in the strongest terms, and report back to this Congress by March 20th. Further, we demand that the settlement when made shall be retrospective from the date when the programme was submitted to the Railway Executive Committee."

Mr. Thomas also sent out to the branches a statement so that they might be fully informed, and appended a copy of the national programme framed at Leicester, and that the demand put forward was not only to add the present 33s. to the war wage, but that the E.C. in order to give effect to standardisation took the highest paid in any grade and added that to the war wage of 33s., which was the demand for the basic rate. As an illustration: 6s. 9d. was the average rate paid to drivers, apart from the war wage, but a small number of men were rated at 9s. 6d. per day. They had asked that the maximum should be reached in a period of not more than three years, which he added to remove any misconception as to what the demand for the inclusion of war wage really meant. He asked them to understand that no man would lose any of the present war wage while the cost of living remained as it then was, so that the portion of the war wage not given as a permanent increase on basic rates would operate on a sliding scale, as was then in existence. Reminding them of his past efforts to improve their lot, he said he would continue to fight their battles. He asked them to recognise the difficulties, and so put the facts before them, in case they were called upon to withhold their labour, a power they must conserve, but which must be the last resort after all other efforts had failed.

The Special General Meeting adjourned to the 20th, when the union Executive asked the delegates to accept the offer. They passed a resolution reiterating the decision of the 14th, and "that the Railway Executive and the Government have not seen fit to concede our national programme, and we, therefore, having no alternative, declare a national strike. We instruct our E.C. to report our decision to the Triple Alliance and adopt and support a national strike by that body. We further instruct our E.C. that the report of the Triple Alliance be submitted to this Congress on Saturday." The Government were informed that the Congress had decided to reject their offer. The Triple Alliance decided to lend their support in the negotiations with the Government, and asked the railwaymen to postpone the strike until further efforts were made. Messrs. Smillie, Hodges, Gosling, and Williams were to accompany Mr. Thomas if an interview could be obtained with Mr. Bonar Law. This was arranged, and the Special General Meeting received the report of the negotiations, when they decided to suspend the strike until the Negotiating Committee obtained the exact wording of their proposals, and to meet on the following Thursday to consider them, and in the meantime the E.C. were to endeavour to co-operate with the craft unions in presenting a joint programme for the shopmen and to report progress to the meeting.

They interviewed the Government in the persons of Mr. Bonar Law, Mr. A. Stanley, the President of the Board of Trade, Sir Robert Horne, Minister of Labour, with their secretaries. Mr. Thomas put the position before them: That they had launched their national programme in 1914, and went into the old conditions and anomalies that abounded then. The men in 1914 were smarting under the wretched conditions

that then existed, but in the national interest they suspended them, and Mr. Asquith, the Premier, and Mr. George, the present one, had promised that they should not suffer as the result of that suspension, and now that the war was over they asked for the redemption of the pledges. The programme the railwaymen considered reasonable and ought to be conceded. The miners had temporarily suspended, as railwaymen had, the stoppage of their people, but if any one of the bodies stopped the moral obligations and the spirit of comradeship were such that all three bodies would work together and a strike would take place; and there was no minimising the gravity of the position.

Mr. Law asked if the grievance of one body did not justify a strike in the one case would the three bodies come out, and he was informed that they would, and that they were not afraid to put all their cards on the table, and he went into details showing how any dispute in one section of the Alliance affected them financially in the other two, and the large amount that was paid out by them in the case of the miners' strike of 1912, and so they thought they must organise their forces and mobilise them to the best advantage for all. Mr. Law asked whether there was any particular item the men would like the Government to reconsider. Mr. Thomas explained the difficulty in that, as the Government had said it was their last word, but there was some doubt among the men as to the definition of even the principles, and that, though they were negotiating with the Government, the terms showed the hands of the railway companies. Knowing their tactics so well, it was an attempt to show something as being done that could in practice be wiped out, and went on to show how it operated with regard to night work, a principle Sir Albert Stanley had sanctioned with regard to shopmen, who would be ruled out. The Government frankly told them of the difficulties they would have with regard to the craft unions, numbering from 40 to 50, if they settled with the shopmen through the N.U.R., and they should settle among themselves their domestic differences and come to them with proposals, and could not be responsible for the internicine strife which would result, but the definition of night duty and standardisation was made plain. On the 27th of March, 1919, the Special General Meeting met, with the following result:—

“The General Secretary reported on the negotiations with the craft unions and the further negotiations with the Government respecting the interpretations of the Government's offer on the National Programme.

“Moved: ‘That a careful examination of the wording of the amended proposals now before us, together with the report of the negotiations responsible for their present composition, convince this Special General Meeting that the margin of difference between the demands of our members as contained in the Leicester programme and the achievements of the Negotiating Sub-Committee in the present negotiations is insufficient to bring our members on strike to obtain. We, therefore, decide to make a settlement of the present dispute on

the basis of the final terms submitted, and intimate our intention to the other parties forming the Triple Alliance of that fact. We further instruct the Executive Committee to press forward the negotiations re the points of the programme not yet dealt with in order to bring about an early and, if possible, peaceful solution of our outstanding difficulties.'

"Amendment: 'That, after hearing the further report from our General Secretary, and in view of the definite refusal of the craft unions to meet our Executive Committee on the shopmen's question, we decide to redeem our pledge to our shop members and to enforce our National Programme. We decide to declare a national railway strike to-morrow, Friday, at 12 o'clock midnight.'

"For: Brown, Collier, Cossins, Davies, Golding, Jenkins, Partridge, Phillips, Powell, Richards (W. J.), Thickett, Wenlock, Williams (W. H.), Wilson, and Woods. Against: Rest of the delegates.

"Lost.

"Second amendment: 'That this Congress, having heard the report on the further negotiations which have taken place between our Negotiating Sub-Committee and the Railway Executive Committee, together with the Government, whilst not being satisfied that the demands of our members have been justly met, decide, having regard to the fact that it is not the intention of the Government to deduct the war wage, to accept the offer, and we instruct the Executive Committee to summon this Congress at the earliest moment to ratify the outstanding points yet to be discussed. Further, we decide this settlement be accepted subject to an arrangement being come to with reference to shopmen at the earliest possible moment, but not later than this day fortnight.'

"For the resolution: All the delegates, except Black, Brown, Collier, Cossins, Davies, Evans, Gore, Griffiths, Jenkins, Partridge, Phillips, Powell, Richards (W. J.), Thickett, Watson, Wenlock, Williams (J.), Williams (W. H.), and Woods, who were against.

"For the second amendment: Black, Brown, Cossins, Evans, Griffiths, Richards (W. J.), Watson, and Wenlock. Against: Rest of delegates.

"Resolution carried."

Mr. Thomas sent the results to the branches:—

"I desire to point out, as I feel sure the members will appreciate, that although we have not secured all we set out to there can be no mistake about the magnificent progress made. When it is remembered that many of the items now obtained have been the goal of the union's ambition for over forty years, we have every reason to be proud of our achievement. The question of standardisation and other matters are to be immediately considered, and for this purpose we are continuing our negotiations. It is with regret that I have to announce that we have failed to make an agreement for the whole of our members, but they themselves will be first to recognise that it is not due to any failure

on our part to press the case, but in consequence of the division of the men in various unions. The E.C., however, is taking every step in its power to bring about an arrangement with the craft unions which will ensure a united programme being presented. In reporting the settlement to our members I would urge them not to forget that it is the result of combined action, and however keenly they may feel the disappointment at the failure to secure a settlement for all our members on this occasion, I am satisfied that by renewed efforts, increased membership, and loyalty to each other this will soon be achieved. By being able to present a united case we shall continue to obtain for the railwaymen of the country those conditions long overdue, which will do much to make their lives brighter in the future than they have been in the past."

The week was to be one of forty-eight hours, guaranteed, and to be exclusive of any time paid for Sunday or overtime; to be guaranteed the week when available for duty, turns commencing on a Saturday and finishing on a Sunday to be part of the week; to be paid for to all who signed on, except time off for illness or their own convenience. Paid for time worked when coming late on duty. Split turns on the Electric Railways to be continued, but for motormen not to exceed five per cent. of the total duties on each line, for a maximum of seven and a-half hours spread over twelve. Gatemen working with motormen to be governed by the same rules, except those put on for strengthening trains, who may have to work all split turns, but not to exceed twelve hours. The traffic and engineering department grades, when available for duty, a week's pay; for each day when in six equal turns, on such standard wage, though arrangements could be made for five stages and one short one; overtime when working the rostered turns. Coming on duty for three hours on Sunday to be paid a minimum of half-a-day at Sunday rate; if exceeding that and required to come on twice, to be paid for all time worked, with a minimum of eight hours. Split turns to be abolished. Emergency calls outside rostered turns of duty to be paid at overtime rate for the minimum of a-quarter of a day, and not to be part of the guaranteed week. When on special duty occupying more than four hours, to be treated as one of the six turns of duty, if unfitted by the emergency turn to take up the ordinary turn. Overtime rate, time and a-quarter. Sunday duty to count from Saturday midnight to Sunday midnight, and to be paid for at time and a-half; Good Friday and Christmas Day to be paid as for Sunday. All ordinary time worked between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. to be paid at time and a-quarter; overtime during that time at time and a-half. Rest to consist of twelve hours, with a minimum of nine. One week's holiday with pay after twelve months' service, to include casual labour.

The other points were in negotiation, and a Joint Committee was to be set up of the two unions to deal with outstanding questions; but the present rate of wages was to be stabilised till the end of the year. With regard to the rates of pay and standardisation in the existing anomalies, they would come up in the general revision of wages when

fixing new standard rates, and to ensure that all men should receive the same pay for the same work under the same conditions, which involved a transfer of part of the war wages to permanent wages; but up to the end of the year no man would receive less in weekly rate of wage, plus war wage, than receiving at present, while anyone to whom the new war wage and new rate yielded more received the advantage of it. The whole situation was to be reviewed at the end of the year. Such in brief, perhaps at the expense of plainness, were the terms.

During the period covered we had dealt administratively with members medically discharged from the army as unfit; raised the salaries of the General and Assistant Secretaries, also delegates' expenses; taken steps to release conscientious objectors, for whom no one fought harder than Mr. Thomas; were represented at an International Conference and an Industrial Conference at home, and a host of other matters, which included intervention in Russia and income tax questions, swept within our ken.

The shopmen's question continued to cause anxiety, and the "Railway Review" in its issue of May 2nd, 1919, put all the issues in its new adventures, and said, among other things: "When the N.U.R. decide to break from tradition and to experiment with the idea of permitting any person in the railway service to become a member of the union, irrespective of his or her craft, grade, or administrative position, it struck the serious obstacles of a century's growth of experience and prejudice, and it aroused the antipathy of a hundred unions whose members went to the railway companies' tables for their wages, as a venture of this character might be expected to do. The pride of craft and the vested interests were, and still are, disturbed."

That has all along been the difficulty. Things they could not do they would not let us do without protest, and the Government, obviously anxious to settle the question, welcomed the idea of negotiating for all if it could be done. But crafts stood in the way, and the long, seemingly interminable struggle went on and on in the wearisome efforts to find a common path. They met our E.C., but still we went on beating the air, and the worker suffered as a result.

The supervisors also brought us in conflict with the Railway Clerks' Association. Anyone who has gripped the amazing work of our union cannot, however deep may be his prejudice against us, but ask what in all the efforts that had been made, the negotiations conducted, the results achieved, where was this association, and how the other union played but a small part. We had a right to say, "We are the people," and the steps through struggle and attainment emphasised that. These two sectional unions had only strength imparted by our greater strength. But for us their efforts would have been futile, and agreements might have been the presentation of a blank sheet of paper. The answer the R.C.A. returned, in substance, was, "What did Bell say?" They spoke it, and printed it, and their folly passed as wisdom. They started poaching, and a lengthy and vigorous correspondence passed between the

two Secretaries over the matter of transfer to their union from ours by allowing our membership to account for a period. On February 24th Mr. Thomas issued for publication in the "Railway Review" the following:—

"To the Members,—My attention has been called by a number of branches to a circular issued by the R.C.A. wherein members are invited to leave any other organisation, and one month's back dating of membership in the R.C.A. will be given for every two months' membership in such other organisation. I have taken up strongly with Mr. Walkden on the matter, and desire to inform all members that such an attempt at poaching will not only immediately be dealt with by this organisation, but the full resources of the society will be used to stop it. When also it is being stated, upon whose authority I cannot yet ascertain, that our union is neither negotiating nor intends to negotiate for the supervisors, the members should clearly understand that any such statement is absolutely contrary to fact. Need I point out to the supervisors that every advance they have obtained during the war has been due exclusively to the power and influence of this society. It is common knowledge that the advances have been given to them following upon our negotiations. Furthermore, the statement that authority has been given to the R.C.A. to negotiate for the supervisors is one that a very few weeks will prove how fallacious the statement is.

Mr. Thomas also wrote to Mr. Walkden, the Secretary of the R.C.A., drawing attention to these facts, telling him that he had seen many cases of poaching, that the offer of two months' membership in other organisations for twelve months' membership in another was the most deliberate piece of poaching that had yet come under his notice, and that every advance the railway clerks had obtained was due to the N.U.R. No attempt on the clerks had been made by us. It was serious. The case against the R.C.A. was admitted by Mr. Walkden, but he pleaded that as far back as 1911 it was discussed and the N.U.R. had raised no objection, and contended that they had agitated for the clerks and the supervisors. Mr. Thomas's reply to this was to give the facts and the decisions of the interview held at the time. Of the six numbered paragraphs it is sufficient to quote one only: "That any attempt to create separate organisations for supervisory grades outside the recognised Trade Unions catering for such will meet with our strongest opposition." The bite in the correspondence was: "Surely no one knowing the facts as you do can other than frankly admit that the power of your organisation was totally inadequate to obtain anything like what has been secured had it not been for the driving force of the N.U.R." Which ought to be the last word not only to the R.C.A., but to all other sectional unions.

The E.C. of the N.U.R., in June, unanimously passed the following resolutions:—

"Moved by Hill and Law: 'That having considered the points raised at our joint meeting with the R.C.A., this E.C. decide to ask

the R.C.A. if they would agree to a Sub-Committee from both bodies meeting to consider the basis of relationship between the unions with a view to drawing closer together and working jointly in the present negotiations with the Railway Executive. We would further urge that as a preliminary the R.C.A. should agree to withdraw the transfer arrangement so widely circulated by them.'

" Moved by Harris and Niven: ' That further to our previous resolution we decide to appoint a Sub-Committee of five, with the President and General Secretary, to confer with a Sub-Committee of the R.C.A. with a view to an agreement being arrived at on the programme to be submitted to the R.E.C. on behalf of supervisors, due regard be given to the programme drafted by the supervisors' conference arranged by this Committee.'

" Moved by Anderson and Thomas: ' That this Committee hereby decide that before putting into operation our previous decision we await the reply of the R.C.A. to the point raised in our resolution of yesterday re transfer of members.'

" Moved by Hill and Law: ' That we appoint Messrs. Starling, Anderson, Niven, Farmer, and Harris, together with the President and General Secretary, as our Sub-Committee to meet the R.C.A.' "

The Joint Sub-Committee drew up the subjoined programme:—

" TO THE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

" In accordance with your instructions we attended the meeting of the above to discuss the matters arising out of the negotiations for supervisory and clerical grades, and have to submit for your consideration the following items, which we recommend should be agreed to:—

" The appointment by the Government of a National Committee to decide upon the line of demarcation as to what are supervisory grades.

" Night Duty.—The clerical staff on continuous night duty should have a five-turn of duty per week. Three years to be limit on night duty. Supervisory grades over men in the manipulation of traffic to have enhanced rate of payment, not less than to trafficmen.

" Proposals—Scale 1, minimum rates:—

" It is agreed to support this.

" Minimum Salary Rates.—To establish minimum rates of salary in accordance with the scale given below for all general clerks in every department of the railway service:—

GENERAL STANDARD SCALE OF MINIMUM RATES.

Age.	Salary.		Age.	Salary.		Age.	Salary.
	£			£			£
16.....	70	...	21.....	160	...	25.....	200
17.....	80	...	22.....	170	...	26.....	210
18.....	130	...	23.....	180	...	27.....	220
19.....	140	...	24.....	190	...	28.....	230
20.....	150						

" With £20 additional for London throughout the scale.

“ Positions of those having more than ordinary responsibility: Positions in classes agreed to.

“ Positions of more than Ordinary Responsibility.—To obtain a fair and complete classification of agencies, stationmasterships, inspectorships, and all other positions of more than ordinary responsibility, and to secure the adoption of the following rates of salary for such appointments :—

POSITION IN CLASSES.									
1	2	3	4	5					
Salary.	Salary.	Salary.	Salary.	Salary.					
£	£	£	£	£					
850	650	500	375	250					
900	700	550	400	275					
*1,000	800	600	425	300					
—	—	—	450	325					
—	—	—	—	350					

“ Increments to employés in Classes 1, 2, and 3 to be payable biennially, and to those in Classes 4 and 5 annually.

“ In every case the salary on appointment to be not less than the minimum for the class in which the position is listed. The classification of positions to be carried out by a Commission on which the staff shall be jointly and equally represented with the railway authority.

“ Promotion.—All vacancies giving opportunities for promotion to be advertised to the staff by official circulars, with dates upon which the applications are to be dealt with. The authorities to be assisted in making their decisions by standing joint committees representative of the management and the staff concerned in the respective departments affected: these committees to nominate a small panel in each case from those applicants who are considered most suitable, efficient, and meritorious. The authorities to make the final selection from such panel.

“ The case of every clerical supervisory or administrative employé who has received no promotion or increase in pay for three years to be considered, and if no suitable promotion is available a special increase to be granted.

“ Hours of Duty.—To divide the clerical and supervisors over operating staff, who must work with manipulation of traffic grades.

“ Clerks, thirty-eight hours per week. Supervisors (traffic), forty-eight, inclusive of meals, per week.

“ Periods of Rest.—To be the same as the clause agreed to for other grades coming within the Conciliation Boards in the national settlement.

“ Overtime Pay.—To be at rate and a-quarter.

“ Sunday, Good Friday, and Christmas Day.—To be at rate and a-half.

* As paid to Postmasters in the principal cities.



William Bell
Editor of Railway Review



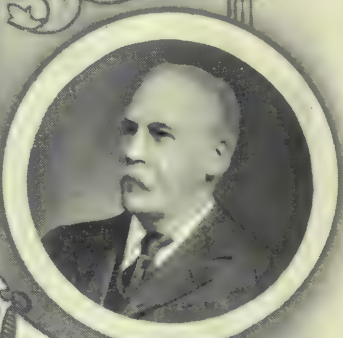
Edw. Phillips.
Ed. Railway Gazette



James Greenwood



W. Foreman.



F. Maddison.



G. J. Wardle.



Willet Ball
1922

EDITORS
RAILWAY REVIEW.

“ Annual Holidays.—A whole fortnight (exclusive of Bank and local holidays) to be allowed each year within the period April to September inclusive, plus a further week in odd days or otherwise, as may be most convenient; additional leave to be allowed to senior members of the staff according to years of service; adequate relief to be supplied to cover the duties of those on leave.

“ Bank Holidays.—In the event of enhanced rate for Bank Holidays being refused, we press that one day's leave with pay be allowed for each Bank Holiday worked, this additional leave preferably to be attached to annual leave.

“ Sick Pay.—A minimum of six months' full pay and six months' half-pay to be allowed during any period of two consecutive years, and if the illness is prolonged each case to be sympathetically reviewed.

“ Uniform.—Not to press this matter.

“ Stationmasters' Houses.—Where allowances in lieu of houses are made the existing allowance shall be increased 25 per cent.

“ Superannuation.—That we press jointly that all clerical and supervisory employes included in the scales of salaries shall be eligible, if age permits, for admittance to the Superannuation Fund.

“ Re Transfers from N.U.R. to R.C.A.—The R.C.A. undertook to issue a notice to their branches stating that the transfer terms are to be discontinued forthwith so far as N.U.R. members are concerned.

“ The N.U.R. agreed to discourage the correspondence, etc., relating to the R.C.A. and N.U.R. in the 'Railway Review,' and to advise their Organising Secretaries and others to discourage any attempts to induce clerks to leave the R.C.A.”

Negotiations between the two unions—the Associated and ourselves—and the Railway Executive took place at Euston on June 27th, and came to an agreement as to time pure and simple, exclusive of preparation and disposal of engines, marginal times for preparing engines, promotion and seniority of men in the conciliation grades, cleaners to firemen, and firemen to drivers, and seniority of men through sickness or accident.

The arbitration proceedings with reference to shopmen were held at the County Hall of the L.C.C. on June 24th, when the N.U.R. presented a claim for an increase of 15s. per week in wages and for the then war wage of 28s. 6d. and 12½ per cent. bonus to be transferred to wages. Mr. Compton, of the Coachmakers, opened for the craft unions, and Mr. S. Chorlton for the N.U.R. Mr. Brownlie, the President of the A.S.E., referred to a letter which he had received from the Railway Executive that our society had entered into an understanding with them as to skilled workmen in the shops. “If that statement is correct,” said Brownlie, “I wish to take this opportunity of reminding the Railway Executive that we (the A.S.E.) do not recognise the right of the N.U.R. to take action to secure or to further the interests of skilled men employed in the railway service.” It was only what they had done all along before employers and at Trades Union Congresses, and there was with regard to that “nothing new

under the sun." The court, however, decided that the wage claim was not established. The E.C. had to protest against the delay in negotiations, that the recent settlement had not been put in operation in Ireland, and prepared a programme for clerks and supervisors, and in the midst of the negotiations the Railway Executive announced an interim bonus without apprising the unions concerned and without consultation with them. They had intimated that they would submit to the unions their own proposals within a week or ten days, but did not do so, and it was regarded altogether as a breach of faith and subversive of the principle of collective bargaining.

During July, 1919, 51 men on the N.E. were called upon to undergo an eyesight test by signals. Ten of them refused and were suspended, and thereupon others struck work out of sympathy. The E.C. proceeded to Newcastle, when they invited a deputation to meet them, and wired other places that they were dealing with the question and that the men should remain at work pending instructions. The strike committee responded to the E.C.'s invitation to meet them by they themselves inviting the E.C., but afterwards repented and came, and then, again, afterwards refused. The E.C. opened up with the company and the Board of Trade, and eventually the terms of the settlement were as under:—

"The President of the Board of Trade having stated that unless something unforeseen occurs a national eyesight test will within a month be established by the Government by which both sides agree to be bound, the following terms were agreed to: (1) The examination of men who would normally present themselves for eyesight testing before August 21st be postponed till after that date. (2) That the ten men suspended be reinstated as from the 21st inst., with their old rates of pay, subject to their eyesight being re-examined in the ordinary course from the date mentioned. (3) All men on strike to report themselves for duty to-morrow or Monday, as the case may be." It was signed by Mr. Walter Hudson for the N.U.R., Mr. Thomas being away in America, and by Mr. A. Kaye Butterworth for the company. The men afterwards asked for financial allowance, but it was turned down.

Mr. Butterworth, in sending the draft, asked that the union do all in its power to get the men to return to their duties, and referred to the difficulties the union and the company had through the unauthorised action of extremists, which was a revolt against the established authority of the union, and their action, if successful, would seriously impair the maintenance of constitutional relations with the union, they having publicly announced that they would have no test but their own, and it was evident that no negotiation was possible on such terms. Mr. Butterworth also withdrew the summonses that had been taken out against the men. Looking back over the years, we see the North-Eastern Company ruthless in the 1867 strike, but from that time they became easily the first railway company in methods of approach from their workmen in advocacy of conciliation and arbitration, but ever against that stands the historic fact that this company

had more labour disputes than any other, and it was often resented by the workmen on other companies, who made the comment often that it was no encouragement for their company to make advances in the light of that experience of the North-Eastern. The fault was that the Executive did not govern, and did not enforce rules and make obedience to them one of the primary conditions of a well-governed union, which might have hastened the spreading of benefits over all other railways. The other companies used to say when their own men made advances, "Look at the North-Eastern," and they were justified in saying it.

Only the complicated work on a railway could have furnished the difficulties that were and the adjustments that had to be made in the various matters that arose out of the national settlement, but each one was gripped and reason was brought to bear upon all—payment for statutory holidays, periods of rest and week-ends, and disputes out of subsidiary callings in docks and other places. The best that could be done was done; failure here, success there; reason and discussion playing its part well. In the broad facts of administration these details are apt to be overlooked, but they had an important bearing upon all other things, and had to be dealt with as they came.

Printing costs engaged the attention of the E.C. Perhaps there is no union in existence in which every detail of administrative work is so fully put before the members as ours. This involves large printing orders, and mounting up as they did during these years they had to be inquired into. In every investigation that had yet taken place the Co-operative Printers had always come out as the best, and here, again, they did so. This is the report:—

"STATIONERY SUPPLIES.

"TO THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

"GENTLEMEN,—In accordance with the instructions contained in Resolution No. 320, June ordinary meeting, we have gone carefully into the question of prices charged for printing and stationery, and in addition to obtaining the latest quotations from the Co-operative Printing Society, we also secured estimates from the Co-operative Wholesale Society, Pelican Press, National Labour Press, Twentieth Century Press, Leicester Co-operative Printing Society, and the Garden City Press. We find that owing to the unsettled position of affairs in the printing world, by which the cost of paper and labour is continually fluctuating, it is difficult to obtain estimates which are likely to be of a permanent character. We find that, taken as a whole, the latest quotations received from the Co-operative Printing Society are the most favourable which we have been able to obtain, and we, therefore, recommend that no change be made at the present time.

"In our opinion, the prices charged to the branches for rule books and stationery were in excess of those which were necessary to cover the cost. The estimates which we have up to the present allow for a very considerable reduction to the branches, and a

revised list has been compiled and put into operation by our Goods Department. We recommend that this revision apply to all stationery affected by the revised quotations. Examples of the old and new prices will be submitted to you.

“ ‘Yours fraternally,

“ ‘(Signed) GEORGE MASON.

C. T. CRAMP.’

“Moved by Anderson and Thomas: ‘That having considered the report of the Sub-Committee on stationery supplies, this E.C. decide to adopt same. We appreciate the fact that we have had quoted to us considerably reduced prices for stationery. Further, we decide that the report be printed with the minutes of this meeting.’

“Carried unanimously. (Wilson in the chair. Browning absent.)”

During July, 1919, there were threats of a national strike to rule out conscription from our national annals, which would have been “direct action.” Our own union was against conscription; the Labour Party had declared against it, also the Triple Alliance. When Mr. Thomas returned from America he found the agitation in full swing, and in a speech at Derby and in a letter to the “Railway Review” he gave his views. In his letter he said: “I am well aware of the keen differences of opinion on this all-important question of direct action on a political issue, but members know my views, and on fundamental questions I feel that I would be failing in my duty and disloyal to those who believe in me. . . . It is the duty of a leader to have the courage of his convictions, and not to hesitate to tell his members what he believes to be the right course.”

In the speech he told them we were not going back on what had been attained, that the better, altered conditions had come to stay. They were going beyond discussing merely hours and wages, but in all matters that affected their daily life their position should be partners in industry. The Government also should have a policy and declare it, only unfortunately their vacillating methods had created the impression that men must strike before they could secure justice. He hated strikes, which were a double-edged weapon; they should be the last resort, not the first. Alluding to the strong opinion among both leaders of Labour and the rank and file, that they should ignore constitutional action and fight by the strike weapon alone, he asked them to think of what might well happen if a Labour Government was in power and there was an objection to its policy. If it was right for Labour to do it now, it would not be wrong for the other opposing party, and if the worker did not use the political power he had in his hands, it was folly to settle it by a strike. The same standard of honour was demanded from all sections, and he asked for loyalty to constitutions and to alter where defective by constitutional usages. They were not to be swayed by the idea that they had only to down tools and the rest would be easy. They had to regain their own self-confidence and the confidence of the whole world and rebuild the ruins of war.

In the end Churchill's predatory instincts were checked, the Government saw the red light and altered their methods accordingly, and in Parliament, where Mr. Thomas had always urged these questions should be discussed and settled, he told the House some home truths, and pointed a more excellent way. From that period he with more ardour than before urged control and management in industry by the workers.

Directly after this national negotiations went on, and a fine fight was put up for all grades, and during July, August, and September the governing body was exceptionally busy. They met the craft unions at York, and the Shipbuilding Federation, the Associated, and the R.C.A. On August 18th Marwood, of the Board of Trade, wrote to the unions concerned in the locomotive negotiations and to the Press stating the proposals for settlement, which admitted the outstanding demands of the national programme, standardisation of wages, for which there had been many a long and weary fight in the years that lay behind us, question of age (when to be labelled "adult"), terms of promotion, mileage, extending even to definition of "turns" or "shifts," time trip rates to be abolished, and many other things. It was very near the maximum demand of the N.U.R., and, as Mr. Thomas said, "On the whole a splendid arrangement and one that would give substantial improvement to the overwhelming majority of locomen." He said he was well aware of the dissatisfaction in their not supplying information during the negotiations; but the work was great, and there were tactical reasons that prevented. "I trust this will give one more illustration of the power and prestige of our organisation for dealing with all grades, and when I remind members that the programme submitted for locomotive-men was a joint one by the Associated and ourselves and agreed jointly, the value of working together will be evident to them."

On September 7th Mr. Frank Hodges, of the Miners, Mr. Robert Williams, of the Transport Workers, and Mr. Thomas addressed a meeting at St. Mungo Hall, Glasgow. Mr. Thomas's speech was perhaps one of the most important, certainly the most comprehensive, delivered by him, because it covered so many phases, dealing, as it did, with past, present, and future. He said that nationalisation of mines and railways would be for the benefit of the community; that was why he was an advocate, but if he thought it would injure the State he would oppose it with all his strength and power, because no section of the community was more important than the whole. Passing on to negotiations during February, he said they had a measure of success in two things, one that every man and woman should enjoy wages and conditions higher than previously, and the converting of the war wages into a permanent one, and establishing an eight-hour-day; the wages were stabilised in the abnormal circumstances and were to remain till the end of the year, and in the interval efforts would be made to standardise. "Hurry up," said a voice, which caused him to say when they met the Government and the companies they were faced with two loco. programmes, which they got over. The

lesson was to meet the employers as a united body with one voice. Another difficulty was having 128 grades of employ  s, in a single one of which there were sometimes ten to fifteen variations; the grade of one railway was not the grade of another; no railways in Scotland had obtained what had been obtained in England and Wales. They applied standardising conditions, that all the workers for the same work should receive the same wage in all countries.

The companies would have taken the lowest; we took the highest, which itself had a difficulty, because some with exceptional privileges wanted to pit them against the universal. Some asked why was the locomen's case settled and not all the other grades. It was not settled because of the doubtful propaganda ideals in vogue, in which it was said, "My union is the best; leave yours and join mine." They had acted so that it might not be said the traffic men were stopping others from having their wages. As a national organisation they were not going to stand by and allow one grade to be bought off at the expense of the other. If the fight came the platelayer was as much as an engine driver. It must be a settlement that includes every grade and for the first time standardise every grade, which could only be obtained by solidarity, and he uttered a warning, which was a true prophecy: "The coming winter instead of finding us with more food and lower prices will find us with larger numbers of unemployed, will find us with real hardships on every hand." And it came to pass, as we know. Then to those who welcomed a fight he said the silly notion that down tools was the only way to solve a dispute was doing harm to the movement, and at the end of his speech said: "I have to ask you to remember that Trade Unionism does not mean platitudes of brotherly love, does not mean wearing a medallion, does not mean paying your contributions and never attending the branch, and it does not mean talking about brotherly love to-day and cutting each other's throats to-morrow. Trade Unionism if it means anything, means that you are prepared to subordinate your individual end to that of the common good of all. You ought to be proud of the record of the organisation. It has done much for you. It has improved your conditions; it will do more and more if you will have the commonsense to recognise that, while you cannot all be drivers, cannot all be foremen, cannot all be goods guards, at least you can all be men."

But we were then on the edge of a dispute, and it was a little over a week later that he wrote in the "Railway Review" the substance of some of the above speech, and in which letter he told them they were facing a crisis. "I would urge the members not to be alarmed or allow themselves to be stampeded into a position of difficulty, but to remember that the E.C., who have been conducting the negotiations, are in touch with all that is taking place, and whose work on behalf of all grades cannot be too highly appreciated, are facing the situation calmly, but determined that everything shall be done in the interests of the members. . . . We have now received in the main the proposals of the companies, and, in our judgment, they fail to meet

the situation, but would prove a serious injustice to those grades whose pre-war conditions were above those of similar grades on other companies." A circular was also sent out to the branches in which he told them that the E.C. were prepared to go a long way to avoid a rupture, but felt that they would be wanting in their duty and would fail to discharge their responsibility if they did not intimate their view to the Government. The tone of the circular was the greatest good for all, and he asked them to keep their powder dry.

The warning had not long been issued when the strike took place. It came to be known as "The 'Definitive' Strike," because Sir Auckland Geddes had used that word in a communication to the N.U.R. It was an uncommon word, not often used—it was known to have been used in the time of Henry V., when the Archbishop of Canterbury passed sentence upon the Church and State reformer, Lord Cobham, who escaped from the Tower, and four years afterwards was martyred in St. Giles' Fields. The Archbishop said: "Now, then, we can only act as the law directs, and must, therefore, now proceed to a definitive sentence, and judge and condemn you as a heretic." The papers made merry over it, and it was considered an unfortunate word to have used. Negotiations had been continuous. Special E.C. and General Meetings had been held. Then we come to September 24th, 1919, when the E.C. passed this resolution unanimously: "That having received further proposals from the Government laying down the basic rates of wages for the various grades in the Conciliation Board Scheme other than drivers, firemen, and cleaners, this E.C. note the great difference between the rates suggested by this organisation and those submitted by the Government, varying in certain cases up to 16s. per week, and as this offer would ultimately mean a serious reduction to many of our members that would not allow them to maintain a decent standard of life, we instruct the General Secretary to at once inform the Government that this offer cannot be accepted by us, and that this Committee is at present in session awaiting a further offer. In the event of such further offer not being arrived at by 12 noon on Thursday, the 25th inst., we shall have no alternative but to instruct our members to cease work in support of their claims. We further instruct the General Secretary to immediately get in touch with our branches and instruct our members to hold themselves in readiness to act upon instructions from this E.C." And again: "That, failing further offers from the Government, we decide, in order to give effect to our Resolution No. 664, to instruct our branch secretaries that, failing further instructions from this Committee by 12 o'clock midnight on Friday, the 26th, the whole of their members must immediately leave work until instructed to return by this E.C." The companies and Government had evidently gambled on the chance of averting a strike by propitiating the loco. section and withholding it from all others. But the gamblers lost. A meeting was arranged with the Prime Minister and members of his Cabinet to discuss the situation on Thursday, September 25th, which took place, and was of a very protracted nature, being published in full. The

parties discussed every phase of the situation and the seriousness of it was apparent to all. Explanations were asked for and given on both sides, and the Prime Minister, quite cognisant of the effects of any decision the Government made, said: "Whatever we lay down with regard to the railwaymen, you may depend upon it is going to be claimed throughout the country, and, therefore, we have to consider not merely your case, but the cases of all the other trades in the kingdom," which lent itself to the suspicion that a fight now was a fight for all the workers of the United Kingdom. The E.C. met on the day the meeting was arranged for, and they suspended their decision till the interview with the Government was over, and asked the branches to wait for further information.

On the 26th they uttered the fateful word: "That his E.C. having carefully considered the offer of the Government for a basis of negotiations to effect a settlement in the railway dispute, regret that the Government will not apply the principle which brought about the settlement for locomotive drivers and firemen to the other grades in the Conciliation Scheme. It is, therefore, with regret we feel we cannot effect a settlement which would be acceptable to our members, consequently we are forced to put into operation our decisions of the 23rd and 24th inst., and now confirm the instructions already issued to our branches." And the war began. On the 24th they had taken the precaution to inform the branches that communications might be broken and that they were to give effect to their decision to strike, and the strikers were asked not to violate the law by damage to the companies' property or leave their engines with fire, so that there was no danger of explosion. Statements were issued to the Press by both parties, but, as was to be expected, the Government had the best Press voice, and so a message from Mr. Thomas was provided to be put upon the cinemas.

The Associated had sent the following letter through Mr. Bromley:—

"My E.C. have now had an opportunity of considering the information as to the demands of your union and the Government offer in reply thereto, which you were good enough to send round to me yesterday afternoon, and the following resolution has been passed, which I am instructed to forward to you immediately:—

"That having carefully considered the demands of the N.U.R. re grades other than those of drivers, firemen, and cleaners, and also the offer of the Government in response to such demands, we consider, in view of the rates of pay now ruling in other industries throughout the country, that such offer is in the main totally inadequate to compensate the men for the work performed and to meet the existing cost of living, and we think that if industrial peace is to be secured such offer must be increased. We, therefore, press upon the Government the need for improving their offer and thus avoid further public inconvenience, and hereby decide to extend any necessary support to bring this movement to a successful issue."

"This is the reply of my E.C. to the suggestions in the Press that steps are being taken to deal with the railwaymen should a strike ensue, and I trust it may be helpful to you in your negotiations. I am conveying this information to the Press."

This as a matter of policy and generosity was the finest thing the Associated had ever done in its history, the more notable because loco. claims had been met. On the other hand, the security for them lay in getting them for all others, and he wired to his members: "Executive decided to support N.U.R. Our members must strike to-night at midnight." So railway workers, clerks excepted, were one. The Press, a not unusual proceeding, tried to queer the pitch by their statements, the "Daily Herald," of course, being the exception. Meetings were held everywhere, and there was no doubt it was a workers' fight. It was not the E.C. calling upon reluctant men to take upon themselves a strike in which they had no heart. There was even a threat amongst the Printers to strike owing to the statements the papers printed and issued, and owing to this pressure the papers had in some cases to bring their criticism within the realm of fact. On Sunday the Joint Executive of the union met, and, under the signatures of Messrs. Thomas and Bromley, issued this:—

"Response beyond all expectations. Let neither prejudice, pressure, nor jealousy divert you from realising the fight is such that your existence is at stake. All has been done that any man could do to prevent it. Now that it has come we must and will win. Keep you heads. Victory assured."

In London meetings were held at the Albert Hall, Clapham Common, Parliament Hill, and many other places. From every quarter came heartening messages that the fight was going well. On the 29th Mr. Thomas issued this:—

"Fellow Members,—The fight is now clearly resolving itself into one where the very existence of Trade Unionism is at stake. Those who have been waiting an opportunity to fight Labour have resolved that the railwaymen should be the first target, and in order to win their battle they have brought on their side all the forces of hell. The Press are clearly showing their hand. The lying and misrepresentation all show how desperate they are, but with undaunted courage the railwaymen are not to be intimidated, bullied, or driven into sacrificing a principle that means the rest of the workers would soon have to submit to their war wage being wiped out. Why, then, are they talking of cost? Do they leave the profiteer, with his gains obtained through the blood and sacrifice of our men, untouched? Why, when the railwaymen, 147,000 in number, volunteered, and the remainder worked long hours to help to win the war for freedom, did they not then show their hand? It was because they thought it would be too dangerous. The 'Times' gave the whole show away when it stated that the railwaymen must be fought as we fought the Germans. Who fought the Germans? The workers! They will not fight their own class. I

have risked all. During the war I risked my reputation by my efforts to compromise, and they have tried to take advantage of it, but they will know that, regardless of the sneers or jeers, I am not going to desert those who placed me in responsibility. I am going to lead the railwaymen to victory, which is as assured as I dictate this message."

Mr. Bromley wrote:—

"The locomotivemen secured a settlement, but they never intended to desert the other grades. We have joined because we know the fight is right. We will win because we know that right will triumph."

At the Albert Hall meeting Mr. Thomas gave in detail what passed in the negotiations with the Government. The Government used all the resources of the State in the way of transport, but they were altogether insufficient for public need. Our old nobility who knew something of engineering worked some engines, and they managed to scrape a few trains through. Mr. Thomas sent a message to the country. The Premier did the same, saying they were not fighting Trade Unionism, but to prevent the extremists from attempting to gain their ends by attacking the community, and so bringing untold misery upon thousands of innocent people. After a nine days' battle the strike was settled. Negotiations had taken place, and a way out was found. As Mr. Bromley said, it was a glorious fight.

At a second Albert Hall meeting hundreds failed to get in, and Mr. Bromley and others addressed the overflow. Of course we had the usual "We did not say that," or, "If it was said, it was not meant as you took it," from the Government side.

The settlement terms were: (1) Work to be resumed forthwith. (2) On the full resumption of work negotiations shall be continued before the 31st December, 1919. (3) Wages will be stabilised in the United Kingdom at their present level up to September 30th, 1920. Any time after August 1st, 1920, they may be reviewed in the light of the circumstances then existing. (4) No adult railwayman in Great Britain shall receive less than 51s. as long as the cost of living is not less than 110 per cent. above pre-war level (5) The N.U.R. and A.S.L.E. & F. agree that the men shall work harmoniously with those who have remained or returned to work, and the Government and the two unions agree that no man shall be prejudiced in any way as the result of the strike. (6) The arrears of wages which have been withheld in consequence of breach of contract will be paid after the resumption of work. This was signed by Messrs. J. H. Thomas and D. Lloyd George.

There was not a little bitterness imparted into the otherwise harmonious proceedings, as is typified in clause 6. The Press, in its foul campaign, indulged in personalities, and Mr. Thomas having been in negotiation for the purchase of a private dwelling-place, they published a photo of the house in a suggestive form. It reacted to Mr. Thomas's advantage, as the members got up a subscription fund, of

which Mr. C. Harris was secretary, and £500 over and above the purchase price was collected, which they gave to Mrs. Thomas to purchase the things necessary for a new habitation. The co-operative societies did splendidly. Owing to the inordinate delay in getting letters through the Post Office strike pay did not arrive to time, and where this happened the co-operative societies helped. Then was seen in its best form the value of co-operative banking, which besides giving better financial results in the ordinary working was in every way of incalculable service. For the splendid services rendered by Mr. Bloxham, the London Branch bank manager, he was presented with a gold medallion, whilst for his ready assistance to the Trustees he received a brace of pipes. The Trustees were hourly in expectation of the Government making a raid upon them financially, but they were saved that. Then the union had to start, as we sometimes do the morning after a party, to "clear up the mess."

At Derby, Mr. Thomas, in a very lengthy speech, went into all the details of the negotiations and settlement, the Press diatribes against himself and Mr. Cramp, showing how the shopmen were to benefit by the settlement. He said that he had received a letter wishing him success, enclosing forty German marks, and hoped that he would lead a revolution, but on holding it to the light he saw the paper had an English watermark. The Press had also sought to show that Mr. Cramp was the real leader of the strike, and that Mr. Thomas was, and would be, but a mere figurehead in the union's affairs. These things saved those who had a sense of humour the necessity of buying a comic paper.

The adjourned A.G.M. from Plymouth for an alteration of rules was held at Unity House in November, and then two Secretaries were decided upon, Mr. Thomas to be General and Parliamentary Secretary, and the other the Industrial Secretary, and eventually Mr. Cramp obtained the latter post. Messrs. J. H. Dobson and J. G. Muir, Organising Secretaries, and Messrs. W. Hudson, T. Lowth, and S. Chorlton, Assistant Secretaries, were retired with suitable allowances, the A.G.M. delegacy was enlarged, and the rules generally overhauled.

The Loco Negotiation Committee went on with their work, as did all others, and soon a loco. agreement was made and a Central Wages Board was accepted, which was to be composed of five representatives of railwaymen, three of them from the N.U.R., two from the Associated, five from the railway companies, and one to be a floating representative, who might have special knowledge of any particular subject brought before the Board, the unions to have the same privilege, and if it was desirous either party could co-opt another, making six in all. Also a National Wages Board, composed of four representatives of railwaymen, four of the users of railways, one being nominated by the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress, one by the Co-operative Union, one by the Associated Chambers of Commerce, and one by the Associated Chambers of Industries, the scheme to continue during the period of Government control, but neither body was to deal with the negotiations then pending.

The negotiations went on and a Special General Meeting was held on January 7th, 1920, but on the Sunday before Mr. Thomas made a speech at Birmingham, where he explained what had so far been arrived at. He dealt with the elimination of grades, showing the reductions in one section of platform staff had eliminated ninety-five grades, who were to be absorbed in two. In addition, 201 grades were absorbed in sixteen, eighty-nine grades of shunters in two, twenty-six grades of signalmen to six; and 512 grades had been wiped out. The difficulty was not with the elimination of grade, but the standard category. They went for the highest, and he explained the signalmen's, supervisors, and clerks' position of an immediate advance of 5s. till the methods and the basis were settled. The speech was of two hours' duration, so that even a summary of it is impracticable. The decisions of the Special General Meeting were :—

“ That this meeting welcomes the principle of standardisation of railway work by the elimination of a large number of grades, and accepts, subject to the anomalies in the group of grades as shown in the schedule submitted to this Congress.”

The wage rate basis did not fare so well—

“ That this meeting approves of the principle of standardisation of railwaymen's wages, but rejects the proposals submitted to us because of the basis of existing average wages. We instruct the E.C. to enter into negotiations with the Government for standardisation rates based on the highest rate of wages plus war wage to each grade concerned.”

With regard to the sliding scale, the following was passed :—

“ This Conference decides to reject the principle of a sliding scale based on the cost of living. While being a very important factor, it is not the only factor on which wages should be fixed, and would tend to stereotype the present standard of comfort and would prevent any improvement being obtained, no matter how the productive forces of society may be improved.”

Also this :—

“ This Congress decides that any increment accruing under the present war wages negotiations shall operate as from August 18th, 1919.”

With reference to excluded members, they decided—

“ This Congress, after careful consideration of the Government's proposals, regret that a very large number of our members are excluded, and demand that negotiations shall be opened for these grades at once.”

It was also decided that any settlement arrived at should include the Irish railwaymen.

The following with reference to shopmen :—

“ This Special General Meeting of N.U.R. delegates having arrived at conclusions relative to the standardisation of wages and grades of men coming under the Conciliation Boards instruct our E.C. to press forward the formation of machinery for dealing with the claims of

railwaymen and all others outside the recent proposals as expeditiously as possible, and remind the Government there can be no peace until this machinery is set up."

Eric Geddes wrote that he had carefully examined the terms of the resolutions, and had observed that the delegates had overthrown the results of the negotiations of the past few months; that the Government had reached the limit, and those resolutions forwarded him conflicted fundamentally with the arrangements arrived at and must be submitted to the Cabinet. The Government's reply cut across these resolutions, and the following finding of Congress explains them, obviating the need of details :—

"That this Conference having heard the reply of the Government to our resolutions and the further explanations of the General Secretary, whilst fully appreciating the inclusion of our Irish brothers and the offer for grades not originally included, also the proposals for meeting the hardships of those whose combined rates are higher than the proposed new standards, again reaffirms our belief that the only applicable method of standardisation is by taking the highest maximum of each grade or group of grades, and whilst the only means to obtain this at present is by a general strike, recognise that such a course is unwise, and therefore decide to accept the settlement under protest, and instruct the General Secretary to call a Special General Meeting immediately the final proposals for signalmen and other grades are completed."

"That this Conference, after hearing the explanation upon a flat rate to each member affected as against the actual amount for those members whose basic rate would be higher than the combined war wage and original rate, by the General Secretary, decide to accept the flat rate."

Circulars were sent to the members and a separate one for Ireland explaining the position they occupied. This so delighted the Irish members that they subscribed a large sum by way of testimonial to the negotiators, which, in the main, was returned to them for the nucleus of a Trades Hall at Dublin.

It will be remembered that of the Labour M.P.'s only Mr. Roberts and Mr. G. J. Wardle remained members of the Coalition Government. The members of the latter's branch asked for his expulsion, which was an unkind cut. I leave my readers to decide which had the most unkindness in its folds, the request or the reply of the E.C. :—

"That having considered the request from Hornsey and Wood and other branches, that this E.C. should call upon Mr. G. J. Wardle to resign from the Government, failing which he should be expelled from the union, we desire to point out that Mr. Wardle has long since ceased to exercise any influence either for or against the interests of our members, and that although he was, and is still, a Member of the Government with whom this E.C. are negotiating, we are convinced that he has no power to influence negotiations in any way whatever. Therefore, taking this view, this Committee do not deem it

necessary to pursue this matter, but to let Mr. Wardle follow his own inclinations, as they can do no harm, until the time when the general Labour movement cleanses itself from association with all who have 'ratted' and identified themselves with the caucus who are not interested in forwarding the aims of Labour."

This was carried unanimously.

The Clerkenwell Branch also wanted the E.C. to co-operate with the co-operators in a supply of foodstuffs in the event of a strike. The E.C. replied as follows:—

" we appreciate the interest of our members in this matter, but would point out this condition already operates in our recent experience throughout the country. Therefore, it is a question for our members themselves to join their particular co-operative stores, in this way to ensure the necessities of life to be at hand when occasion arises, and make such local arrangements they may deem to meet their requirements. We therefore wish to point out to the members the splendid assistance rendered to us by the co-operative movement to this union. The best method to assist for all our members is to join their respective co-operative stores."

In the narrative I have so far eliminated the personal, except where it would hide historic facts. I may surely here regard it as a personal triumph, as for a long time mine was the only pen and voice that advocated co-operative banking, and of the small services I have rendered to the union I am as proud of this as of any.

Chapter XXV.

SALMAGUNDI.

AN outsider who knew railway life only when there were disturbances might say, from the time when the strike took place or the settlements were effected, that Trade Union officials had nothing to do; that nothing wanted adjusting, and that there were few, if any, matters that required their attention. But it was not so. The year 1919 was undoubtedly the most prolific of history findings of any of our fifty years, and one chapter has been given to it, and even then we have only picked up an incident here and there and thrown it upon the page as an illustration of all the rest. We come now to 1920; and land is in sight. When I open the pages of our E.C. reports for 1920 I find as many as sixteen different subjects dealt with on four pages, which emphasises my view that a leader's life in a railway union is never idle, and surely, of all our leaders, Thomas has had the most difficult, the most arduous and exacting of any, and no wonder "that the pitcher went once too often to the well."

We must glide over the remaining time, trusting that the centenarian will do fuller justice to the themes before me. The member who never attends his branch, and even some of those who do, would be amazed at the amount of work connected with the negotiations dealt with in the last chapter. They stud every page. It is quite easy to read a finding in an approved resolution, but the reader must be invested with a vivid imagination to conceive of the reality of all the work there is behind it. The Irish case necessitated a visit to Ireland to get the sure touch, the exact facts, and to deal with them comprehensively. There were the Tube Railways, which were not under Government control. They stood in a position by themselves, and other means had to be found so that these should reach the heights of others. The Parliamentary application for increased fares was the only way; because you cannot get more out of an undertaking than is put into it, and the public must pay for accommodation. So also in the making good nationally the deficit of railways used for war purposes. The nation had the advantage, and it could not be worked on a profit and loss basis. We stood for the redemption of the bargain as against some of our Labour friends, and Thorne was told in the House of Commons by J. H. Thomas that he would do the same for his union if the cases were equal, and anyone who knew Thorne would know that that was so. The questions of shopmen, the Wages Board, negotiations with other unions, supervisory and clerical grades, besides matters of

a general character, all had to be dealt with. The handsome service rendered by the Associated during the 1919 dispute had to be considered, and more stable relations wrought out between the two. A Sub-Committee was appointed, and the following was the basis, and a fraternal visit to their A.G.M. was arranged, with Thomas and Cramp as the delegates.

" BASIS OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE A.S.L.E. & F. AND N.U.R.

" In order that the two unions may better protect and further the interests of their members employed on railways, it is hereby agreed that the following policy shall be adopted in order to assist each other in offensive or defensive action, and to ensure that joint action be taken in all matters affecting railwaymen :—

" (a) A Joint Committee composed of six members from each union, who shall meet by summons from either side, and whose functions shall be to look over, initiate, and forward the interest of the locomotivemen and electric trainmen of both societies, subject to the approval of the respective Executive Committees.

" (b) Before any movement is inaugurated affecting locomen by either society it shall be the duty of the respective Secretaries to convene this Joint Committee to consider the application.

" (c) In the event of such movement being agreed upon it shall be incumbent upon both unions to take all the necessary steps to bring same to a successful issue.

" (d) Before a strike is declared affecting members of either organisations, it shall be the duty of the joint Secretaries to convene the Executive Committees together in order to consider and decide on the policy to be adopted. For this purpose the respective General Secretary shall act.

" (e) In order to ensure that this friendly arrangement shall not be prejudiced by members of either union, there shall be an instruction issued that attacks upon each organisation should be discountenanced by all responsible officers and members of each union.

" (f) In the event of any violation of any of the above clauses, it shall be the duty of either Secretary to draw attention of the other side immediately, so that a meeting can be arranged to discuss the matter. No Press or public statement to be made prior to the investigation taking place.

" For A.S.L.E. & F. :— " For N.U.R. :—

" W. A. STEVENSON.	C. HARRIS.
J. WALKER.	A. J. BAYNE.
W. J. R. SQUANCE,	J. C. ALLEN.
W. GAMBLE.	W. T. GRIFFITHS.
C. W. JARMAN.	P. H. BLACK.
J. BROMLEY.	C. T. CRAMP.
	J. H. THOMAS."

But it would be false to history's page if we eliminated a sentence which has been written. The deeds done and the written word must stand, with hopes of a new era, and the presentations made to Mr. Bromley and others show, in a small measure, what we thought of their action.

During 1920 the "Daily Herald" applied for financial assistance, which the E.C. dealt with by referring it to the supreme governing body, who decided to grant a sum equivalent to 1s. per member, the matter to be considered by the next A.G.M. Here, again, legal difficulties stood in the way, but they were advanced a few thousand pounds, with a promise that when it was paid off they would advance a mortgage on a two-thirds valuation of a building being erected in Manchester, and which the C.W.S. advanced money upon until such time as the mortgage was effected by us.

Another item that caused much discussion, the passing of many resolutions, and covering a long period of time was the Kilmarnock strike, in which after the first stage the workers did not know their own mind.

Signalmen had many conferences to smooth out their difficulties as to whether lever movements or other methods should be the method of computation of wages, but it was not settled to the satisfaction of signalmen. But as they have ever been among the most ardent workers and among the most loyal to our organisation they accepted with good grace the failure, and then waited upon time to adjust things satisfactory to themselves. So also the dismissal of youths, satisfactory arrangements being made with the companies.

Space is now at a premium, and the clerks' agreement, with those of stationmasters, goods agents, yard masters, and passenger and parcel agents, cannot be given in detail. For February, 1920, they occupy over two pages of the "Railway Review," with an explanation by T. H. Watkins, of Sheffield. The R.C.A. never seemed to take kindly to our achievements in this respect, and so our organ had to take them in hand, dealt with their misleadings, their poaching, misstatements and innuendoes, and suggested they had not quite got over the shock of the supervisors of months before.

"The R.C.A. previous to this had suggested with some dignity, if not sublime impudence, that they should take over our supervisors and conduct their movement, not knowing there were 7,000 supervisory members of the N.U.R. as against 2,500 in the R.C.A. Throughout its negotiations with the N.U.R. and other associations the R.C.A. representatives mistook a quiet reserve as a sign of weakness, and a lack of indiscreet garrulity as an invitation to walk over the other parties. They have suffered more than one shock when they were brought up against unexpected facts, and the other parties have not rushed into print about it. Even upon the achievement of recognition by the R.C.A. that union does not know to this day the share of the N.U.R. officials' work in that achievement, nor have the N.U.R. officials mentioned the facts in public, or sought to achieve any advertisement

for what they did. It is a hard, plain matter of fact that in negotiations for all grades of railwaymen the N.U.R. has been inside before the R.C.A. had found the door, and now the R.C.A. resents the attitude of the N.U.R. It is very funny."

These things are among the pleasantries of what are sometimes termed rival organisations. How much easier if all leaders were in one building, with one programme; one mind giving shape to the collective mind, with unity of effort, pooled cash, and the companies dealing with one body, and that well disciplined and well led. Will anyone say, looking back on these pages, that the A.S.R.S. and its offspring, the union has not been well led? Each successive leader has met with courage and brains the need of the moment, the work of the hour. The accumulated experience of half-a-century had attained fruition; but even ripe fruit has to be carefully handled. A foolish utterance, a reckless deed, may wreck in a moment what years of effort, the outcome of deep thought and active labour, with true vision and sure aim have steadily built up. What genius has wrought in exquisite statuary, presenting a life-like form by infinite attention to details, may be reduced to dust by the swing of a hammer, or the creative work of a painter, in which form, beauty, and almost life are limned upon canvas, may be made a blot of by an evil-disposed mind with a paint pot and brush. Not alone are wilful deeds responsible for destruction; thoughtless deeds rank with them; and leaders have to work like those who rebuilt Zion, with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other, to continue to build and guard what has been erected. There are sins of ignorance, thoughtlessness, and non-appreciation, as well as of those wrought with malice aforethought. To each of these Thomas had a message. The swift thought, the sure speech, were always there. He would point to the past and bring old poineers upon the stage, and ask them to invest the path with imagination. He would point out to them the difficulties of the present time, having to meet the accumulated brains of all railway companies, the wishes and needs of the public, and how railwaymen's aspirations mingled with these, and provided counteraction and checks; that it was not a case of saying "We want this and we will have no other," it was a matter for bargaining, for a display of reason and well-timed arguments, meeting reason with reasons, rending wider the small rent in a faulty argument of the other side; pushing home an advantage where an advantage was, and beating down disadvantages with tact, diplomacy, and skill. The man with a wish for another shilling in his pocket and an hour less in his working day has the vision of both, but does not always see what difficulties may lay in the way of getting them. To fail and yet wait, to mingle patience with skill, to seize a renewed favourable moment to pluck success out of possible failure, to wave the arm downwards and counsel patience to insurgent Labour, and with the other arm a different motion to the party treating with, are among the qualifications of good leadership. I place on record here that not a word, suggestion, thought, or sentence has been given me to say of

any man, men, actions, or movements, favourable or unfavourable, but as one who has to be faithful to convictions and reading of history, I say that in the most difficult period of our history Thomas did all these things with unrivalled skill, resourcefulness, and vision.

Had he but railway companies and the Government to deal with the task had been easier, but the individual, with much pertinacity and little thought, with narrow views and limited vision, would keep crossing the path of effort, and danger lay that way. Did he ignore them? No; he met them, argued with them with a wealth of experience, showing the difficulties, the achievements, and the spoils seized. Nor did he go where opposition was feeblest, rather he went where opposition was greatest, and so meeting the strongest, and obtaining victory, the feebler elements would crumble and vanish. My reading of his acts without a word of guidance as to his intentions is this. When he had a great policy to enunciate, a deed to defend, he would select a meeting where men did congregate and where he was sure of a good Press voice—he may have made preparations for that Press voice—and that place became a sounding board to the United Kingdom. They then knew where Mr. Thomas was, and wise men knew and waited. Liverpool, say, has been in these years a storm centre, with leaders not always wise, and actions not always calculated to be an aid to good leadership and the success of causes. He went there and beat down the recalcitrants with speech, skill, and facts, the audience with interjections sometimes making a more effective speech and winning, that with only an exception here and there, as once at Swansea. They recalled what Methodist preachers used to say of their audience, "They came to scoff, and remained to pray." He turned the tables upon the interjectors, pursued the pursuers, put his facts in place of their inferences. When at Liverpool he spoke of the great harvest reaped by standardisation, which evoked the interjection: "A reduction," and quick as lightning the challenge shot forth asking the interjector to show a single case of reduction, which was not given, so when using figures as an illustration, taking £3 as a pre-war figure, the objector took it as an appraised standard, and the interjector said "Five." "Well, take five; take any figure you like; ten if you will." He showed a minimum of 100 per cent. added to every grade, or group of grades, as the irreducible minimum below which none could go, and then went on to show gains above that, and how the sliding scale would always be weighted in favour of the worker. They had concentrated at the bottom and brought them up to the average without the man at the top getting a reduction. He pointed to the guaranteed day and week, an eight-hour day, the guarantee that excluded Sunday, which day had provided for it enhanced rate outside the week; night duty between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m., time and a-quarter; six days' holiday with pay; war bonus, and more, added to wage; standardisation; hybrid grades abolished, and all reduced tending to simplicity and certainty; not less than twelve hours of rest between duty, and so he ran the whole gamut of achievements. He might well have asked were these

nothing. Let the 62-page booklet of "Thermos" tell what it meant for enginememen; also the explanations printed of others by Mr. Watkins, of Sheffield, which should have convinced the most sceptical and allayed any lingering discontent, and given satisfaction to all. As President Abraham said: "The settlement did not give absolute satisfaction, nor ever would," and he, too, laid his hand upon solid bedrock facts, and that in the history of Trade Unionism no union had ever achieved so much, the great truths of which ought to have given a sense of proportion to critics.

Perhaps the sliding scale received the most criticism, and from Mr. Cramp, through a band of intellectuals, the whole matter was well and ably discussed with divergent views, and outsiders chipped in and chirped with us. Perhaps of all grades the signalmen had the most reason for discontent. They deserved a better fate, and without any intention of pitting grade against grade, but merely as an excuse and a plea for better deserts, say they have ever been among the most loyal and hardest workers in the old A.S.R.S.—indeed, Mr. Evans used to say that with a signalman as branch secretary the branch was assured of success. If attainable at all through a secretary, then the signalmen secured it, and so he always did his best to get signalmen for that office. Lever movements are not the only factor that enter into duties to regulate pay, there are a hundred other things, but if all other things were equal then lever movements might be an absolute determining factor, and if alliteration is permissible, the old "but" will but in. For example, the present writer was at a cabin in which he had only one signal for the up road and two for the down, and two of those were controlled by slot from the other box, when to the next two boxes nearer Liverpool Street they had double the signals, with "bereadys" to give, which I had not, and though all may not agree that the sound of receiving is better than merely the memory of giving, yet here is one case in which lever movements are no guide, and yet the lesser lever movements were a scale higher. Let us hope by the time this page is read the signalman will have come into his own and with more like his just dues. But in any case I can prophesy, and bet if necessary, on his loyalty. He will work and wait, and waiting he will win—with work.

In the life of a leader, like general life, there are lights and shades, and sunshine and shadow lay close to each other. One would have thought that after what Mr. Thomas, ably supported by the governing body, had done, that we should have been spared this in our records, which, needless to say, met with short shrift. It was from Kirkcaldy Branch, and was submitted to the A.G.M. at Belfast:—

"That this Congress decides this is an opportune time to review the line of conduct adopted by the General Secretary, Mr. J. H. Thomas, before, during, and after the recent national strike. This Congress notes that during the months immediately preceding the strike Mr. Thomas was ever active advising the membership of this union on the need for increased production and the folly of direct action, while, on the other hand, he utterly failed to warn them of the Government's

obvious plot, then maturing, to launch a sudden attack on our organisation, with the intent to break it up.

“ This Congress also notes that during the strike Mr. Thomas went around protesting that we had no intentions of pulling down the Government, and imploring other unions from coming to our assistance, what time the said Government was organising every possible means, legal and illegal alike, to crush our union beyond repair.

“ This Congress further notes that, following on the so-called satisfactory settlement of the strike, Mr. Thomas failed to press the great moral victory achieved by the rank and file; but instead, frittered away both time and opportunity, until ultimately he attempted to stampede a Special Congress of this union into unqualified acceptance of an utterly unsatisfactory scheme of standardisation on the average.

“ In view of the situation provided by these repeated failures of Mr. Thomas, this Congress demand that the right hon. gentleman forthwith resign his official connection with this union.”

Likes mosquitoes, these things are sometimes annoying and irritating. This is the sunshine. It was an attack during the strike which was intended to sting, and represent journalistic depths, which had sunk low under the Northcliffes and Bottomleys. But the large sum subscribed by Ireland in gratitude to their English brethren showed the reverse side of the shield. It was the presentation of the supscription to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas for appreciation of his work, and was made at the London Coliseum on Sunday, April 4th, 1920, and took the form of the title deeds of a house, £500 to Mrs. Thomas to assist in furnishing it, and an address bound invellum in appreciation of his services during the strike. Mr. Cramp, who presented it, speaking of the cause of the presentation, said he had a vivid recollection of seeing a photo in an illustrated paper showing a palatial mansion, with wooded grounds and a sweeping carriage drive, with an inset of Mr. Thomas addressing railwaymen urging them to struggle on to obtain better conditions.

Thomas, in returning thanks, covered much in his speech of the affection which prompted it, of men who walked weary miles to attend a branch meeting, asking them to lift their hats to the old pioneers, who kept the flag flying under difficult circumstances. He placed the N.U.R. as unique in attainments and influence. Leaders had a difficult task. They were subject to criticism from without and within. He did not expect otherwise. Speaking of himself, he did not ask himself whether this or that decision would be popular, but based on the broader base of right, regardless of consequences, and tell men fairly and squarely the position. With regard to the E.C.'s work, he went into detail, pointing out the difficulties in the negotiations and how they obtained the last possible concession. To try and get more would have involved a strike, which, he believed, would have been disastrous to the railwaymen and the future of the organisation. There were difficulties that were not of their creation, but had grown up with railways, and they must not expect to rectify in five minutes wrongs that had accumulated

for fifty years. As to revolution, he gently hinted a sparing use of the word, because revolution was working every day. We also gave to, and took presentations from, the Associated, through Mr. Bromley, but no gift, no memento, will live, as it deserves to live, as Bromley's inspiring message during the strike, when he said of his organisation: "We do not intend to desert other grades."

The Wages Boards which are established, have, as most other questions, their good and bad points. We urge reason and arbitration and international affairs, and if of value in that wide outlook, it should be of value in industry. There may be prejudices on one side, but is prejudice confined to the capitalist? We may strike, but reason has to decide after the strike, and better begin before a dispute takes place than after, when, if the strike is lost, the capitalist can do as he will. Besides, the public should have a voice in these matters. It is from them that prices come, and it is for the union to decide what is good and what is right in all matters. To order its plans aright, let reason and capability guide. But we must not expect that in matters in which human intelligence has to decide there will be no errors of judgment or wrong decisions; that we or they shall be exempt from it. Those Boards concern the future. It only means what John Burns once said with regard to local government: "The work of the agitator has lessened, and the work of the administrator has begun." In other words, we have new measures, and we have to show other qualities, and at the time of writing this, part of the Scotch inquiry has been published, and we see by the able presentation of our leaders, and their skilful cross-examination and tactics, that they are quite equal to fresh tasks under new conditions. We must have patience, good sense, and penetrating intelligence. The future is ours, if we have them, and with regard to organisation, both in width and intensity, it has to be remembered that there is a limit beyond which force cannot go. We may break our force, lose our strength, dissipate both organisation and funds. Let us walk warily. Let the governing bodies, as they should, shape its policy, and it is for its leaders to give effect to it, and they have a voice in deciding even though they may not have a vote.

One matter caused us trouble during the year, the question of munitions to Poland, and indeed Ireland might well be bracketed with it. Something akin to them, only much worse, was the sympathetic strike. We were to be at the mercy of any small section of men, or of a union, in refusing to carry stuff because of this or that dispute.

But as our trade as carriers involved every other trade, these sympathetic strikes were an absolute impossibility. We should have spent our funds, disrupted our organisation, and put it out of our power to be of any real value to railwaymen. Railwaymen and workmen generally disagreed profoundly with the treatment accorded to Ireland, equally so with regard to the Russian policy, and our E.C. let their sympathies rule them and not their reason. They passed a resolution in favour of the policy over the "Jolly George" without considering the end of that policy, and when they found it impossible to carry it

out they had to modify it. They should first have considered whether the policy was wise and expedient, and whether they had ability to carry it right through. Modifications of policy may mean that you did wrong before you began to modify. The E.C. instructed our members to refuse to handle any material designed to assist Poland against Russia. Later, when complications arose that they ought to have foreseen, large sections did not do as directed, and a hitch arose at King's Cross. These complications looked like spreading, and as one section disagreed with another section in a small area it was hardly likely that other parts remote from the scene, or having no idea at all could grasp the question. Nor was the trouble inside alone. The "Daily Herald," who more than once sought to mould the policy of our union, intervened, and strong articles appeared in our organ dealing with the matter. The organisation must be directed by Unity House and not by "Daily Herald" leader writers. They only express opinions, we have to guide policy and prepare for the end of a policy, so they had to be told "hands off" our policy, in the same language as the paper used about Poland, and it told them they were coloured and misleading. So with munitions to Ireland. Four hundred members refused to unload a ship and went on strike. The same thing occurred in the carrying of military, but it led to interminable confusion, and in the end had to be dropped. The first case was direct action, the second was a matter of sympathy, and anyone can conjecture the feelings of men handling goods that were destructive of the lives and property of those they sympathised with politically.

The case of Ireland was, however, different to that of Poland. In this case the Prime Minister was interviewed. Ireland presented so many problems; all of them through a refusal to recognise Ireland's claim. These were put, and now after the expenditure of much blood and treasure, the policy recommended is sought to be put in operation, and let us hope peace is in sight in Ireland. Our Government asked the National Government to go to the roots of the question, and they have done so. The E.C. decided the wiser course of calling an Irish conference at Bristol on June 16th and 17th. Seventy delegates from all parts of Ireland attended, and it was one of the most orderly. As the "Review" said: "These were men with souls embittered by their experience, self-confident, strong-willed, and powerful in their expression, sitting with others equally strong-willed and equal in convictions politically in opposition to them, striving to find a way out of the difficulty in which their brother Trade Unionists had found themselves. They recognised that only upon the line of their industry could their opposing beliefs be composed and an outlet for their troubles found." Well and eloquently put that. The resolutions carried were:—

1. "That we endorse the action of our E.C. in calling this conference and also summoning the Trades Union Congresses for Great Britain and Ireland in order that Labour may have an opportunity of expressing its opinion and, if possible, finding a solution of the whole Irish problem."

2. "That this conference is satisfied that the present murders and outrages in Ireland are the inevitable result of the Government's failure to govern Ireland in accordance with the wishes of the people. We condemn such outrages by all parties, and appeal to the Irish people themselves to take all steps to protect human life and property and equally to the Government to prevent provocation by the sending of munitions to Ireland."

3. "That in order that the Government may understand and appreciate the serious situation now existing in Ireland and the grave danger of a continuance of violence, we request Mr. Thomas to arrange an interview with the Prime Minister and appoint a deputation, to be composed of North and South Ireland delegates, and trust they may succeed in making such proposals that will enable a real solution to be found."

The interview took place and opposing views were put and met, and, as we have said, conversion to those views came. Mr. Thomas also many times visited Ireland and saw things at first hand and confirmed. Conferences were found to be valuable, and the shopmen, signalmen, and others had them. New appeal machinery was also set up which related to rates of pay and conditions of service of adult males employed in conciliation grades other than locomen.

During the year Mr. Thomas wrote a book entitled "When Labour Rules," which was published by Collins and Company, 46, Pall Mall, S.W. 1, at 10s. It was widely reviewed by the daily and weekly Press, and a rather amusing notice appeared in the "Nation and Athenæum." Mr. Masterman, at one time Member for West Ham, had written a book on the Liberal Policy. Mr. Thomas that week reviewed Mr. Masterman's book in the "Nation," and directly underneath was a review on Mr. Thomas's book by Mr. Masterman. These pages are already overburdened. Suffice to say the chapters of Mr. Thomas's book deal with the England of To-morrow, the Right to Work and the Right to Rest, To-day and Yesterday, the Labour Government and the Constitution, Nationalisation, Labour Government and the Middle Classes, Housing and Health, Health and Housing, Education in the University and the Home, the Trade, Our Foreign Relationships, Our Colonies and Dependencies, India, Ireland, Finance, the Responsibilities of the Municipalities, Women, and the League of Peoples. Such are the twelve chapters; and his work in the municipality and in Parliament fitted him to deal effectively with all phases. Later another smaller book was published by Cassell's appearing under the title of "The Red Light," price 2s. 6d.

During October the miners struck work, and in the national agreement of March 27th, 1919, was the following clause: "In the event of a strike affecting the work of any grade, either generally or in any district, the question of suspending the operation of this article, *i.e.*, the guaranteed week, shall be referred to the Joint Committee to be set up under Article 7 of this memorandum."

A Special General Meeting dealt with the matter of the strike and considered the miners' claims reasonable and just, and as the negotiations had broken down, threatened a strike "unless the miners' claims are granted or negotiations resumed by Saturday, October 23rd, which result in a settlement, we shall be compelled to instruct our members in England, Scotland, and Wales to cease work." This decision was conveyed to the Miners' Federation, Transport Workers' Federation, the Associated, the Parliamentary Committee, and the Premier. The miners requested the N.U.R. to postpone action, and so the notification which had been sent out was suspended for the time being, but they were to be prepared to act on any later information. It was an anxious time for all; and huge meetings were held in London. The miners had given an overwhelming vote in favour of striking, against the advice of their leaders. Mr. Thomas advised our men to keep their heads, and declaimed against a fight to a finish between capital and Labour, showing them at the same time the financial condition of other countries as well as our own, and that but a few days before, when he was in Czecho-Slovakia, the worth of a shilling was only equivalent to a penny. The Government were prepared to concede the 2s. per shift demanded, conditional upon a specified output per annum. The feature of Press lying was expected, and came, as also did the same tactics of trying to drive a wedge between Thomas and Cramp, and so divide the workers. The miners went back to work.

This, however, was not the end. The Government, as in many other things, did not know their mind from day to day, and suddenly decided to de-control the mines. The Triple Alliance met on March 31st, 1920, at Unity House, when the facts of the case were discussed. When the de-control was announced the mineowners with feverish haste issued a notice to the men of a reversion to the old district system, as against the national system, which control enabled the miners to make national settlements effective. The proposed new arrangements would have meant a drop in many cases of 50 per cent. in wages. The notice given to expire on the 31st, terminated the old contracts. The Federation decided that their members should accept the notices, no matter what the terms might be in any district, in order that a united effort might be made to preserve national contracts. As a result of the Triple Alliance meeting our branches were circularised giving the miners' case, and a Special General Meeting was called for April 6th to give whatever assistance they could, and as railways were to be de-controlled in August, the miners' case was theirs, and the thought would obtrude itself that with de-control the same results might accrue for railwaymen.

When the miners' strike was settled on November 3rd, 1920, this provision was among them: "That the miners and owners shall prepare a scheme for the regulation of wages on a national basis, to be presented to the Government not later than March 31st, 1921." The mine-owners therefore broke their troth and expressed their intention of

abolishing the system of pooling profits, which meant that unremunerative pits would be closed down and drastic reductions take place in others. The miners proposed: "All present district rates, with percentages, to be consolidated into a new 1921 standard wage, the Sankey wage and war wage to be a combined flat rate in addition, payable over the whole country on the same terms as at present." The coalowners proposed: "The base rates now in force at each colliery, with the percentage additions paid in July, 1914, to be the new minimum. Advances on the basic rates of pieceworkers since 1914 are to remain." On the question of profits, the miners suggested "one-tenth of the total standard wages to be the owners' minimum profit. Nine-tenths of the surplus, after payment of other costs of production, to be paid to the miners and one-tenth to the coalowners."

The coalowners' "17 per cent. of the total standard wages paid in a district to be the owners' minimum profits, 80 per cent. of the surplus to go to the miners, and 20 per cent. to the owners," which meant a reduction in some districts of 7s. 6d. per day. The miners rejected it by 723,000 votes to 231,000, so that the non-acceptance became a lock-out. The 50 per cent. reduction in some cases would have made an average of 25 all over the country, and to have one's wage reduced one-fourth was hardly to be expected. The matter was debated in the House of Commons. Our own special meeting sat in privacy, excluding even members who were not delegates, and discussed the matter with the Transport Federation, when they decided that unless negotiations were reopened the full strike power of the Triple Alliance would be put in operation as from Tuesday midnight. The three Executives of the Alliance sat in joint meeting, decided that it was to be a joint fight if it spread, and that none of the Alliance should suffer by reason of their action, also that the two other bodies should help the miners to a restoration of the conditions they enjoyed at the time of giving their help. These terms were agreed: "The Government shall summon a conference of the Miners' Federation representatives and the coalowners to meet at the Board of Trade to discuss all questions in dispute, the Miners' Federation to issue notices to the districts to abstain from any action which would interfere with the safety of the mines and might lead to force by the Government, providing they reopened the negotiations unconditionally, and the Alliance would continue in session." Our Congress decided and declared themselves emphatically ready to support the miners by a national stoppage providing the Transport Workers would take similar action, and that it be put in operation jointly and simultaneously. The decision was to strike on the Tuesday, but it was not to include the Irish railwaymen. The other two railway unions were informed of what was going on, and they, too, kept in session. A preliminary meeting was arranged and a conference was decided on with the Government which staved off the Tuesday strike, and it was extended to Friday, April 15th. This was issued: "The Transport Workers and the Railwaymen have unanimously decided to declare a strike at 10 o'clock on Friday night. Many other unions

have sent in applications to join in the strike. These matters are now being considered." The Associated decided to fall into line, the Railway Clerks could not without the consent of their members, but would try to get it, and the Electricians had stated their intention to take part in the dispute.

Whilst the Executives were sitting at Unity House some M.P.'s, who, in the endeavour to see what could be done, invited the coalowners to state their case to them, which they did, and it left a bad impression. They then invited Frank Hodges to address them. The miners had up to then been firm on the question of maintaining the pool idea, and Hodges made a speech which highly impressed them. After that speech he was asked whether they were prepared to discuss the wages alone providing they were not attached to a permanent settlement—that is to say, was the Federation ready to agree to a temporary settlement without prejudice to a national agreement and a national pool, and equally without regard to the district basis which the owners desired, and press the Federation to postpone action to allow this temporary negotiation, and Hodges replied that they were.

The other members of the Miners' Federation who were present did not dissent. The Alliance met at 10 a.m. next morning, and then the miners retired to consider the letter which the Premier had sent asking for a meeting with him on the terms of Mr. Hodges' statement. They were away for an hour and a-half, and on returning said they adhered to their demand for national negotiations and the pool. The Alliance were not told whether Mr. Hodges made his statement on the authority of their E.C. or not, and the miners left for their own offices at Russell Square. The other three parties then sent a deputation of Messrs. Gosling, Williams, Thomas, Cramp, and Moore to wait upon the miners, when they were told the miners had refused the offer of the Premier to meet on Hodges' statement. They had thrown Hodges over, and he had threatened to resign, and soon it was known as far away as Wales.

Here was an extraordinary position, and the partners in the pact were bewildered and thought the strike would be confusion worse confounded, and they called off the strike. The parties, other than the miners, met on Friday morning, and the following statement was issued :—

"The Joint Conference of the National Union of Railwaymen, the National Transport Workers, and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen has found itself compelled to cancel the strike notices for the withdrawal of the labour of their respective members at and from 10 p.m. on Friday, April 15th. In consequence of the confusion which confronted the Conference on Friday morning no reasonable hopes remained of securing the spontaneous and united action of the three bodies, which was essential to give the Miners' Federation the assistance they sought. A partial and hopelessly incomplete sympathetic stoppage would have weakened the power of the three organisations without contributing any material assistance to the miners.

Up to Thursday evening there was every hope of a tremendous display of working-class solidarity, but circumstances which have transpired since that time have destroyed the firm ground on which the call for strike action was based. The Conference profoundly regrets the creation of the changed situation. No other course was open to it than to arrive reluctantly at the conclusion to call off the strike of its members."

That Friday evening, when the decision was made to call off, the news spread like wild-fire over London and away to every corner of the United Kingdom, and perplexity abounded and not a little anger. It was considered as one of the worst blows that had ever happened to Labour, and the day afterwards became known as "Black Friday." There was perplexity, stupefaction, and wonder, and the real cause filtered through slower than the news of the call-off. The news had a mixed reception. To many it lifted the great weight of dread they feared; to others who wanted to see a stand-up fight with capitalism and the Government there was anger. Against J. H. Thomas there seemed to be a dead set. He was the villain of the piece in the calling off of the strike, whereas it was not he, his section, or the transport wing of the Alliance, that was responsible, but the changed circumstances, which had made defeat possible. The collective wisdom had decided that it was better this smaller defeat to organised forces than the greater, with disaster, which would have involved in a strike, the likely consequences of which no one could accurately determine.

There was certainly no credit due to the Government. Their salvation lay not in their wisdom, but in the accidental circumstances that attended the last few hours of trouble. They had no remedy but resistance, unless someone could come along with a proposal which did not involve that. It was, in fact, the part this Government had played from its birth, and will probably play till the hour of its death. It was shifts, expedients, waiting upon events, moving now this way, then that, as the phases of the moment depended. They had the lack of knowing their own mind, and being unable to find guidance in the minds of others. They had neither mind, vigour, nor commonsense; they lacked every sure touch a Government should have. They had not the strength which rulers should have. From the first they walked in a fog bank, and kept in it, and then thanked heaven that accidental circumstances had saved them from a catastrophe. Not merely industrial but civil troubles were hidden in that dispute. The nation itself had watched with anxiety every pawn in the moves, and when the great burden of dread was lifted it was not Labour, it was not the Government they were so much concerned with as the nation. The menacing aspects had caused men's hearts to fail them for fear.

There was the tense dread of possible happenings. On the whole, so far as those who moved among men could see, there was sympathy with the miners, but they did not like the abandonment of safety measures for the mines, and when the miners refused to meet the

Premier they considered it industrial suicide. They could see that the cuts proposed were not just, and meant starvation to those who laboured underground, and as industry after industry closed down, and the nation seemed likely to be involved in industrial chaos, they feared, hoped, and prayed that salvation would soon come. The averted strike was not due to the Government but to the independent thought of the House of Commons, who had a love for a square deal, and the Government rode off on the action of the one and the mistake of the other. How it was received by the railway workers is beyond description. With a section there was relief, with another anger, and the angry ones were not all of the extremist class, but were among the most thoughtful statesmen of our movement, and yet many of them could but see that no other way was possible. It was the most confused Labour dispute that these Isles had ever witnessed, and meant a break up or a radical change in the constitution of the Alliance. It had been formed to "make the bounds of freedom wider yet," and to give them a voice and a strength in all matters that affected the three bodies, and now their building was broken down as by an earthquake. The leaders of the two wings of the Alliance met with unmerited abuse as if they alone were responsible "for the deep damnation" of calling off the strike, whereas they were but the executive powers that registered a duty, delegates having made the decision. That is a tribute to their power, but it was at the expense of truth. Perhaps Thomas most of all came in for abuse. Extremists had wanted to ride on the storm of it to a social revolution, if not a political one, and their hopes were dust. Then followed in the organ of the Communists' libels that had not the merit of fair criticism, but were atrocious. Their organ, the "Communist," libelled them in words and cartoons. Its readers were told: "If you could have watched them behind the scenes as we have done this is what you would have seen—treachery, treachery, and more treachery." One of its cartoons had a miner lying dead, with his lamp by his side, with Thomas as saying: "I claim the right to lay the first wreath—I killed him." whilst another was a representation of the Last Supper, familiar to those who have read their New Testament, and which the artist has given visible representation to. This cartoon was an amended form of the artist's pencil. It represented Thomas as the Judas of the picture, and while the artistic skill of the cartoonist had drawn features which left no doubt as to the portrait intended, they had depicted upon them all the vileness that skill could portray, and underneath were the words, "Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, 'Master is it I?' and he said unto him, 'Thou hast said.' Dedicated to the Right Hon. J. H. Thomas, M.P., P.C., D.C.L." The libels were of such a nature that they could not be taken lying down, and first of all an injunction was granted against them, and the trial came on before Justice Darling and a special jury on November 30th, 1921, and the three following days. The defendants were Francis Meynell, Arthur MacManus, and P. Howard, of the "Communist" newspaper, and the National Labour Press, which had printed the paper. Mr. Hogg, K.C., and Sir Hugh

Fraser, instructed by Messrs. Pattinson and Brewer, solicitors, appeared for Mr. Thomas, and Serjeant A. M. Sullivan for the defendants, MacManus appearing in person. In a lengthy speech Mr. Hogg laid bare the atrocious libels and the real facts of those stressful days. Mr. Thomas went into the witness-box and was skilfully cross-examined by Serjeant Sullivan. Mr. Frank Hodges also gave evidence, and in such a way as to win expressed approval from the judge, he showed that Mr. Thomas had acted fairly and squarely. In the end the jury awarded £1,000 damages. The defendants had not the courage, or too much wisdom, to go into the witness-box. The proprietors of the "Communist" found, as Sevier did in his libels of the "Winning Post" against Bell, that they cannot libel even Labour leaders with impunity. In this case never was a verdict more popular with the general public, to say nothing of railwaymen.

The E.C. had received resolutions from some branches concerning the coal dispute, and they proposed this resolution, which, as it gives facts, is placed here. The amendment, however, was carried:—

"That this E.C., having considered correspondence from a few branches re the policy of this union during the coal crisis, we note that running through some of the correspondence is condemnation of Mr. J. H. Thomas, the Political General Secretary, also a request for his resignation. This E.C. desire to place on record their appreciation of and confidence in Mr. J. H. Thomas. Further, we desire to point out that Mr. Thomas was not responsible for the decisions which cancelled the transport strike of April 15th; those decisions are the collective responsibility of the E.C.'s of the N.U.R., T.W.F., and A.S.L.E. & F."

Amendment by Dobbie and Henderson: "This E.C., after hearing the correspondence from Kirkcaldy and several other branches in reference to the decisions of April 15th in regard to the miners' dispute, decide to refer the whole matter to the A.G.M."

Reading again six months or more after the debate that took place at the Newcastle A.G.M., its length, the intelligence displayed in the speeches, and the decision that was arrived at, it seems to the present writer that Mr. Thomas most aptly summed up the position when he said, speaking of the E.C. and its officers, "We have no regrets, no apologies to make; we have nothing to defend or excuse." The delegates evidently thought so too; and but for the "Communist" that dark chapter would have been closed. There is an aftermath of the law case not disclosed at the time of writing.

My Printer has warned me, because of gathering galleys of type, that I must lay down my pen, so that our last fragment must be merely a postscript history. However, this will not suffer because we stand in its bed. We see, hear, feel, and understand. Chapter after chapter might be wrought on "machinery" alone, and everywhere there is a crowded page of history on our last lap. But—

"Others shall sing the song;
Others shall right the wrong.
Finish what I begin,
And all I fail of win."

Suffice to say, the thirty-two page booklet of "The Defence of the Scottish Railwaymen" will explain all that is needed to say of the skilled presentation and the decision of a Special General Meeting to accept in the following terms: "That having considered the award of the National Wages Board relative to the Scottish companies' proposals, together with the explanations given by our General Secretary, we decide that, having regard to all the circumstances, we accept same." The application to English and Welsh railways they decided on similar lines. With regard to Ireland, it was resolved: "That this Congress decides to accept the memorandum of agreement of February 17th, 1922, re Irish railwaymen's conditions of service, and instructs the Head Office to give all possible assistance to the Irish railwaymen to safeguard their position at the expiration of this agreement." They passed another to "Open negotiations with the Irish railway companies with a view to having the Irish signalmen's case of classification dealt with and finally settled."

The following also explains the signalmen's position generally referred in the text of a previous page:—

"CONDITIONS OF SERVICE—SIGNALMEN.

"After discussion of the recent negotiations regarding the signalmen's settlement of August, 1921, and the alternative offer of the companies, which was as follows:—

"That they should proceed to introduce classification on the basis of the settlement already accepted by us, subject to a modification of the marks allowed for opening and closing gates, and that where it was considered that the new rate for a particular box was not equitable they should increase the classification, whilst, on the other hand, where the classification of a particular box was considered to be too high that they should introduce a lower rate of pay. Furthermore, in cases where men would be reduced, such men should have the right of appeal to the Railway Councils, and that the decisions of these bodies should automatically apply. If the representation of the signalmen on the Railway Councils were not sufficient, they were prepared to agree that at least one signalman from each district should form a committee to meet the companies' officials to determine the position.

"That this Special General Meeting, having considered the alternative offer of the railway companies, contained in the February Special Executive Committee's decisions, is of the opinion that the offer would lead to a settlement for signalmen, which should be obtained as soon as possible in the interests of the signalmen and the organisation. We, therefore, decide to accept the railway companies' offer."

Both in this country and in Ireland our genial Joe Gore won unstinted praise for his services in the arbitration case with reference to the conditions of service in Ireland, and his colleagues of the Executive unanimously passed this resolution:—

"That having had a report of the Irish negotiations, we decide to accept same. Further, we desire to place on record our appreciation of

the splendid service rendered to this organisation throughout the proceedings by Bro. Gore."

The Special General Meeting of February, 1922, passed the following resolution after several laudatory speeches by the President and delegates :—

"RETIREMENT OF MR. J. HOLMES, ORGANISING SECRETARY.

"That this Special General Meeting desire to place on record our appreciation of the services rendered to this union and the Labour movement in general by Bro. Holmes since joining the old A.S.R.S., in 1884, and as Organising Secretary since 1898, who is now approaching the age limit imposed by our rules, and retires accordingly on March 31st, 1922. His long and historic work for the union, and his pioneer efforts for the industrial and political welfare of railwaymen, will ever be a grateful memory to the members of this union so long associated with him, and we wish him a long and healthy life in his honourable retirement."

Jimmy was ever a bonny fighter, and during his services he has seen what it has not been given to every reformer to have seen, the aims, aspirations, and the results of his labours abundantly fulfilled. May his years be many, his health of the best! With the glow of the Western sun in his eyes he can say, "I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith." The hand that writes this is one of those that voted him to the office. There is no regret—Barry notwithstanding.

Gifts from the organisation to others in need abound in our pages. The last are £10,000 to the miners during the last lock-out, £5,000 to two other organisations, and £5,000 to another on a business footing.



With apologies to "Truth," December, 1919

Chapter XXVI.

FEDERATION—AMALGAMATION—FUSION.

WHEN the A.S.R.S. started its career it was for some years the only railwaymen's union in existence in England. Having to depend upon the few pioneers of railway workers and outsiders wishful to befriend them, they had no cash to spend in order to extend it beyond the English borders, and that portion of the United Kingdom took up the whole energies of the pioneers, so that in the uprising of labour, which eventuated in the A.S.R.S., a Scottish society also came into existence, called after our own name. The Englishmen had tidings of the intention, and the fact, when it became a fact. They welcomed its rising, without having the vision to see that it might some day come in conflict and hinder the very aim that both had in view. Nor did the inquiry of Bass extend to Scotland. The abuses were rank in England, and the work that lay ready to hand was urgent, so he confined his agency to this side the border; besides the benefits that would accrue from that would be felt in Scotland as in the other countries, and act and react upon one another. The "Railway Gazette," in its issue of August 3rd, 1872, announced that a Scottish society had been formed, but without any connection with the Amalgamated in London, which was an unfortunate state of things, because it was most essential that all the railwaymen in the United Kingdom should belong to the same union, and that within 20 miles of Carlisle there was no branch of our union. The next issue of August 10th they published a letter from a member of the Scotch union asking upon what terms the men in Scotland would be received into it, and Langley and Chapman were authorised by them to state the terms upon which they could join up with us. Graham going about the country had learned that the Scotsmen themselves were about to hold a delegate meeting and advised action, and the E.C. instructed him and Chapman to send greetings to them, and in January, 1873, just before the meeting was held, the following was sent:—

"AN ADDRESS TO THE RAILWAYMEN IN SCOTLAND AND NORTH BRITAIN.

"BRETHREN AND FELLOW LABOURERS,—We, the undersigned, on behalf of the Council of the A.S.R.S., heartily greet you.

"We congratulate you upon the steps you have already taken to ensure united action among the men employed on the railways in Scotland, and we trust that you will not be discouraged by the difficulties or intimidated by the hostility you will have to encounter in your efforts for the amelioration of the class to which we all

belong. Fully to estimate these difficulties and to be prepared for that hostility is, we believe, the first condition of success in such a movement as that in which we are all mutually engaged, and we only venture to allude to it because experience has shown that workingmen in their first experience of a sense of brotherhood and mutual support have been too apt to under-estimate the obstacles they will have to surmount before they can hope to experience that emancipation of industry towards which the working classes of all civilised nations are beginning to direct their resolute, intelligent, and active efforts.

“ We welcome your efforts, we cordially sympathise with you in your work, and we offer to you the hand of brotherhood. We shall gladly co-operate with you when needed ; our prompt support will be given to strengthen you. We shall, on the other hand, regard your combination as a great gain to our movement, and we shall confidently expect that in every just cause in which we may appeal for your aid our Scotch brethren will ‘ do to us as we would do to them.’ With a view to secure the most complete harmony, our own and your own, we sincerely desire to have your advice and assistance in the consolidation of our association, and we should have asked you to receive our President as deputy to your Council of delegates (that you might avail yourselves of his advice and experience) had not a severe accident just now prevented his visit to the North.

“ On one point we presume to offer advice and caution. Your movement will be misrepresented and you will be accused of an intention to foment strikes and to produce ill-feeling between employers and employed. We know, and all well-informed men of our union understand, that such aspersions and misrepresentations are the invention of mean and hireling scribes, who depend for their substance upon the Press they prostitute for the sake of obtaining advertisements from dishonest officials, who rely upon such mendacious organs to support the system of corrupt and oppressive despotism. In all markets of labour there is freedom for the producer or consumer to combine to protect their own interests without any ill-feeling on either side, but the workman who combines with his fellow workman to ameliorate his condition and to secure an improved price for the article he has to sell becomes at once the object of public misrepresentation. This, unfortunately, has been especially the case in the railway service, wherein the subordinate officials, and too often the heads of departments, assume the airs and practice the parts, of military officers, by which means the servant becomes a slave, and an employment, otherwise honourable—though poorly paid—cannot be continued without loss of self-respect. Time, patience, and organisation amongst the more intelligent of the men will gradually cure these evils, but many may suffer from the injustice of these petty tyrants in the meantime. These martyrs to a great and noble cause will, we know, have your

protection and support in the time of their trial. We earnestly hope, however, in such a case, you will make a handsome compensation to your injured fellow worker who has been the victim of injustice, rather than waste your energies and the funds of your society upon any widespread cessation of labour to which your enemies will try to drive you.

“ Let all indignities against injustice and tyranny take the form of resolute organisation, until by our united efforts every railway servant in the United Kingdom is brought within the scope of its influence. In the meantime, and with a view to prevent any hasty or ill-considered action on the part of a limited number of men, we venture to suggest that you should at once lay down the principle that no strike should take place without the triple sanction from the locality where the injustice is felt, supported and confirmed by your Executive, and finally submitted to the whole of the members throughout your branches. We presume to respectfully urge this upon your attention, because nothing is more destructive to industrial action than hasty, hostile action, which exhibit weakness and impoverish the society whilst it is yet scarcely organised. In conclusion, brethren, we again greet you, and wish you success. We trust that wisdom will pervade your assembly, and sagacity and prudence characterise your deliberations; we shall emulate your activity and exhibit a friendly rivalry, whilst we rejoice in your success as an essential counterpart to our own.

“ We are, dear brethren, yours in faithful alliance, the railwaymen of England.

“ Signed on behalf of the Executive of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, elected in accordance with the resolution of the delegates from all parts of England :—

“ (Signed) J. BAXTER LANGLEY, President.

GEORGE CHAPMAN, General Secretary.”

The Scotsmen went their way and we went ours, we growing in strength, though now falling, and then rising again. The Scotsmen, however, made little progress, and the want of that and the separate organisations hindered us from entering Scotland. They were too feeble to effect any radical change in the Scottish conditions, which made it a hindrance to reform; and Scotland remained with even worse conditions than England and Wales. This position remained till the first E.C. meeting of the A.S.R.S. in 1876. They met with a settled gloom upon them, for there had been lock-outs in the coal and various trades in Wales, according to Evans' report to them. There was no indication of progress because the branch returns of 1874 were in excess of those that had been called legitimate members. There was no society in Ireland, nor ever had been. There was one in Scotland, with 500 members.

In correspondence with the Scottish Secretary, he had suggested amalgamation between the two societies, Scotland forming itself into

one district, which suggestion was to be laid before the Scottish Society. He asked the Council, should they resolve to extend its operations to Scotland, to wait till the issue of the proposal put before them was dealt with by their delegate meeting, or if it would ignore that society's existence and enter the field on its own account. At the E.C. meeting in March, 1876, it was resolved that the term submitted to the Scottish Society be approved, and that three months be given them for their consideration, and should no definite decision be made by the Scotsmen, they themselves should enter upon the organisation of Scotland. The Scottish delegates met, and deferred consideration of it till August, according to the report made. Arrangements were then made and a meeting fixed for June 11th, 1876, at the Moulders' Hall, Glasgow, The Trades Union Congress, which was held there in October of that year, assisted in strengthening the society in Scotland. Battersby, the President of the previous Trades Union Congress, took the chair for Evans, who spoke on the desirability of one union among all railway servants of the United Kingdom. The speech of Evans filled three newspaper columns, and was described as eloquent. After the address George Weston, the then secretary of the Scotch society, rose and said he had come there unofficially, but he had listened with the utmost pleasure to Mr. Evans' address, every word of which he perfectly agreed with. He sincerely believed that an amalgamation was the best course for both societies, and the friendly overtures of Mr. Evans would, he believed, tend to such a result, and he could only wish him God speed in Scotland. One hundred and thirty men gave in their names as members, and the officers were elected and the first branch meeting fixed for June 18th at the Democratic Hall. The "Gazette" was jubilant about the extension to Scotland, saying at the time they had always worked harmoniously with the Scotch society, but that so far from making progress had gone backward and were worse off than England, and that though they had a good officer in Weston. Lockhead, the chairman of the Scottish Society, wrote to that organ in a spirit so markedly in contrast to Weston that one has no difficulty in seeing what went on behind the scenes; that, in fact, some of the leaders were for amalgamation but the men were not.

Lockhead said: "I regret that the English society was here on the 11th of June. This act, to say the least, was poaching with a vengeance. Had there been no Scotch society such a line of action would have been quite right, but the officials of the English society knew very well that there was a Scotch society, and for them to send their secretary to do as he had done was simply unpardonable. Then shortly after the Scotch society had started suggestions for a proper understanding, or, as it were, to have a proper working agreement between the two societies. The failure of this agreement, I think, rests with the English society, or perhaps there may have been laxity on both sides. Again, does the English society consider it is doing what is just and right in this line of action it is pursuing, or do the 130 members who have joined the English society at Glasgow think they have done right by so doing?

Or, again, are the said 130 not satisfied with the rules of the society? If any of these are the reasons why did they not become members of the Scotch society? They have gone very far wrong if they consider by joining the English society they will put things right. What they ought rather to have done was to have joined the Scotch society and put their rules and management on a proper basis. That is all that is wanting, and when our English friends know this it is to be hoped they will stop doing any more antagonistic work such as they have begun."

To this Evans replied: "I beg to trouble you with a few observations on the extraordinary letter signed by James Lockhead. Anyway, all references in his letter, and the society of which I am General Secretary is termed the English society, and it is accused of 'poaching with a vengeance'; the action of its E.C. is termed 'unpardonable.' An assertion is made that the Scotch society suggested terms of a working agreement, and the members of the Glasgow Branch are severely taken to task and told by Mr. Lockhead what they ought to have done, and, finally, our extension to Scotland is set down as 'antagonistic' work which we are desirous to refrain from. It is evident from the tone of his letter that he is an advocate of exclusiveness to a degree hardly compatible with the principles of a Trade Union. The society whose claims I represented at Glasgow is not wholly English, but the Amalgamated Society of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, and as such is registered by an Act of Parliament, so that to accuse us of poaching because it enters Scotland, where it has a legal right, is certainly improper. Comprehensive enough in its title deeds to secure all the railway servants of the United Kingdom, its constitution declares that a genuine union of railway servants cannot be based on class or national exclusiveness. The object of a good Trade Union is not to foster exclusiveness and so produce disunion, but to unite all railway servants, whose defence must be the same that they may mutually aid and protect each other. Calling a society Scotch or English will not aid its influence or give success to its efforts. Influences can only be obtained by unity; the wider and greater the unity, the wider and greater will the influence be. In order to obtain unity we must put exclusiveness on one side. It is because we believe it is to the interests of Scotch as well as English railway servants that one society should serve all that we seek by friendly overtures to bring about a union of the two societies now existing. I have never heard of any terms of a working agreement which have been suggested to us. I know that a working agreement has been spoken of, but no suggestions to its nature have ever been mentioned. The only possible working agreement is the union of the two societies in one. It is, however, evident from Mr. Lockhead's reference to the matter that the working agreement in his mind is an arrangement to exclude this society from Scotland. Mr. Lockhead assumes to tell the 130 men at Glasgow who joined the branch there what 'they ought to have done.' How he should know their business better than the men themselves I cannot conceive. If I may venture on an opinion it is that the 130 men having heard what proposals were made, which Mr. Lockhead had not, and knowing

as well as he the condition of the Scotch society, they were the best judges of 'what they ought to do.' My 130 men at Glasgow are well qualified to give an answer to the faith that is in them, and are hardly likely to accept him as their mentor in a matter of which they can best judge for themselves. Our extension to Scotland is in no way 'antagonistic' to the interests of union which the Scotch society have at heart, but the contrary. If we did but enrol those who refuse to join the Scotch society it would be an advantage, not a disadvantage, to the sister society. Those who are not with us are against us, and better that non-members should be attached to either society than belong to none at all. The success of the Scotch or English society is not, as Mr. Lockhead asserts, 'all that is wanted.' What is wanted is the success of the society which will prove most beneficial to railway servants everywhere. A society which will unite by common ties, interest, and sympathies, the honest railway servants of the United Kingdom in one effort for their common good. Such is the earnest desire of many Englishmen and Scotsmen, and I venture to hope, on reflection, it will be Mr. Lockhead's also. If the action of my E.C. and of the 130 members at Glasgow who have joined the society tends to such a result it will not only be 'pardonable,' but commendable even. Under any circumstances, the railway servants in Scotland are entitled to freedom in their choice of future actions, and if their discretion is unfettered by prejudice, there is hope of a lasting union of the railwaymen of the two countries."

At the next E.C. meeting Evans reported that of the twelve branches of the Scotch society three had replied to his letter and expressed themselves in favour of union. He stated that the question would be discussed next month at the delegate meeting of the society, and advised the Council to at once appoint a Sub-Committee to draw up definite terms to offer to the Scotch society, and, further, decide whether a representative of the society should be sent by the permission of the Scotch society to state orally our views, and afterwards to hold a series of meetings as to whether amalgamation should take place or not. He said that the Glasgow Branch had recommended that no time should be lost before a strenuous effort was made to bring over our Scotch brethren to us, and that already some Scotch members had proposed paying the entrance fees to place themselves in the position of free members. He did not think that course was acceptable, as it would be disadvantageous to other members, and that an earnest well-directed effort might succeed in joining in closer union the men of the two countries and render a service to each by so doing.

For the date of the establishment of the Edinburgh Branch we have before us its intensely interesting minute book. The minute book—so economical had we to be in those days—was presumably the one returned from Watford when that branch fell away, and has on its one leaf the following: "February 15th, '73. This night it is proposed to hold an open-air meeting on Sunday, February 23rd, '73.—(Signed) ELIJAH ATKINSON, Chairman."

" May 10th, '73. Club night. A proposition was passed that there should be a special meeting on Saturday, 6 p.m., May 24th, '73, for election of officers, and a representative for the delegate meeting at Manchester. Sent to General Office for past quarter ending March 15th, 16s. 1d.; P.O.O., 3d.; twenty-five rules and fifty cards, 7s. 9d.—T. LONGSTAFF, Secretary, LAWSON, Committeeman."

Moir, the secretary of Edinburgh Branch, when he sent me the book in 1910, said it came from E. J. Walker, one of the pioneers of the Edinburgh Branch, he having been a member of Watford. Anyway, they did not do much business, nor did they take much money. The following is from the minutes of the Edinburgh Branch minute book:—

" A meeting of railway servants was held on Sunday, 24th September, 1876, at St. Mary's Street Hall, Edinburgh, when Mr. F. W. Evans, General Secretary of the A.S.R.S., delivered an address, and it was proposed by Thomas Horton, and seconded by Henry Powell: 'That this meeting having heard the address by Mr. F. W. Evans, General Secretary of the A.S.R.S. of England and Scotland, hereby resolve to open a branch of the said society at Edinburgh, and recommend to all railwaymen the advisability of at once joining the society.' Proposed by Alex. Littlejohn, and seconded by James Russell: 'That the branch be called the Edinburgh Branch of the A.S.R.S.' "

The first branch secretary was Anthony Radcliffe, who held this office till June, 1877, when Mr. W. Bell was elected, who was delegate to the 1877 Congress at Birmingham. He wrote in the "Gazette" under his own name, and in the "Review," started shortly after, under the *nom-de-plume* of "Scotia," and rained many hard blows by means of his brilliant pen upon the Scotch society. The branch minute book says nothing further of Evans' speech than that quoted above. From elsewhere I take the following:—

"That gentleman very ably delivered a long and interesting speech, which was listened to by a large and very appreciative audience, who frequently applauded the speaker. At the conclusion of the address Mr. Evans invited all who were desirous of joining the National Amalgamated with a view to forming a branch at Edinburgh. The chairman then rose and said: 'Scotland could stand out for her noble self, and that they as Scotsmen needed no help from the English society.' The audience was fairly taken by surprise at the announcement, but they quickly discovered that the front of the meeting was packed with members of the Scotch society, and that it was the Scotch secretary that occupied the chair. It is scarcely conceivable that the admitted leaders of the Scotch society could demean themselves so far as to practice such a dastardly trick on a stranger, as Mr. Evans undoubtedly was. Mr. Evans, however, very courteously, and with tact, pointed out to the men that they had violated the general rule of public meetings by their conduct, and he offered to meet them on their own platform to discuss any matter of difference between himself and them, if they would appoint a fitting time and place to do so. The great body of

men in the hall applauded Mr. Evans and nobly vindicated their own independent judgment by repudiating the contemptible conduct of these interlopers, whose discomfiture was rendered complete while they retired in broken order from the hall. Subsequently fifty men enrolled their names and formed a branch of the A.S.R.S. The Scotch society being manœuvred by such despicable tactics and depending solely on the Scotch 'Thistle' for its support, to its attenuated condition, need no longer be regarded as a matter of mystery or doubt."

Just previous to this Mr. Evans had again attended Glasgow, and the membership had risen to 160.

At that time the Caledonian mineral drivers had proposed to strike, and one appeared imminent. Evans felt it his duty to advise them not to do so; that entering upon a strike without organisation, committee, or funds was to court disaster for certain. So also at Motherwell; they had determined to strike on August 31st. It was at Motherwell that the Scotch society held its delegate meeting, when the proposal for amalgamation was put before them, discussed, and turned down by a majority of one. The Dumfries and Carlisle delegates, who were both in favour, were unfortunately absent. For the averted strike the Scotsmen wanted to claim the credit due to Evans. But Fred was able to give the highest authority, to which they ought to have bowed. It was Hope, who was then Secretary pro tem., who especially requested him not to leave Motherwell till he was able to convey to him the decision of the delegate meeting with reference to the amalgamation. From there he went on to the meeting at Edinburgh as above. The fact of Hope being Secretary pro tem. gives rise to speculations. He was for amalgamation. He blessed Evans' efforts at Glasgow. Knowing they themselves had failed, he wanted him to succeed, thinking more of the men than aloofness and things distinctly Scotch. Weston had to go, and Hope was near going for the same cause, but he was not so courageous as Weston. Evans only knew two men in Edinburgh when he went and planted that branch. The actual number of the Scotch society at that time was a matter of controversy. Evans was told it was only 500. The protagonists of the Scotch said it was 1,000. Whichever it was, its feebleness was a menace to the welfare of the Scotsmen. I have examined all the returns of the Registrar of Friendly Societies at Edinburgh in reference to the Scotch society, and there is none till the last three years of its existence, and the highest peak of membership during those years was just over 3,000, but there is there what I have never heard of before: the return of the "Scottish Railwaymen's Union," which, according to those returns, commenced in 1892, was registered in 1893, "dissolved July 24th, 1895." The Scotsmen kept complaining that the terms of the working union of 1872-3 had not been adhered to. Evans, replying to these, said he was informed that the A.S.R.S. would be welcomed in Scotland. When Weston brought forward the proposed working scheme of those years Evans pointed out its impossibility. When Weston asked for the formal terms of amalgamation these were given as October, 1875.

The E.C. of the Scottish union referred them to the delegate meeting without recommendation or even acknowledgment. The E.C. felt the lack of business ability in this, and decided that if nothing further was heard in three months they would start organising Scotland. Four months passed and still no reply. After the meeting at Glasgow when he wished Evans godspeed, the next day he escorted Evans to Motherwell and introduced Evans to their members, Evans saying: "Whatever faults Mr. Weston may have in the eyes of his members, want of courtesy to a stranger certainly was not a fault. The same remark applies to Hope, from whom I received every attention I could from a brother officer." Lockhead was, of course, the discordant note. Carlisle and Dumfries were in favour of amalgamation. At Motherwell the Scotch society was having a delegate meeting, and he (Evans) was informed they could manage their business without him or interference from the English society. He asked to be allowed to make a statement to the meeting about the amalgamation proposals on their agenda. "It was agreed by a narrow majority that I should be allowed to do so, but await their time. After nearly seven hours waiting and before my admission the reporter was told not to take down what Evans said. I spoke for 15 minutes. One delegate said the English society wanted to grab the Scotch society, and they had better first go and amalgamate with the French. Three hours later Hope courteously informed me that it was lost by one vote." I have the printed report of this gathering in pamphlet form. I have never seen such Trade Union imbecility in print before or since. So the matter went on, with one strike between that and one just before Christmas, 1890. Shortly afterwards the amalgamation of the two societies took place, the end of eighteen years' strife, which must inevitably be when men are apart and do not at close quarters and without passion argue their differences out.

Mr. Harford reported to the E.C. in August, 1891: "The details of your proposed conditions for amalgamation were duly forwarded to the General Secretary of the Scotch society, and were by him submitted to the annual meeting of that society, which was held at Aberdeen on June 14th and following days, and which by invitation I attended. After a full discussion of the whole question the following resolution was adopted: 'That this meeting, recognising the principle of amalgamation between this society and kindred societies in England as being an important factor in securing and maintaining the interests of all railwaymen, agree with the course adopted by our E.C. in negotiating with the English society, and instruct them to continue their overtures, and further to submit their proposals in keeping with the Trade Union Act at as early a date as possible to the various branches. This empowers the E.C. to take a vote of the members to ascertain if the requisite majority are in favour of the scheme.'"

Our E.C. passed a resolution that two of each society meet at Newcastle-on-Tyne, J. J. Hornby and Harford being the two from our society. The conditions were that the members of the Scotch society be entitled to our benefits as new members, but in the meantime

guaranteed the benefits of the Scotch society ; but they would undertake no responsibility of their sick fund, and that Tait, the general secretary, and his assistant, Ballantyne, be taken over.

Before the proposed amalgamation was in progress a meeting was held on November 24th, 1890, at Leeds between the secretaries of the four unions for a federation or working agreement, the outcome of which was they drew up the follownig memorandum :—

“ 1. That as a federation of the four societies is absolutely necessary for the purpose of improving the working conditions of the railway service, we agree to recommend to the Executive bodies of our respective societies that a working agreement be entered into for offensive and defensive action. In the meantime, should any dispute resulting in a strike take place, we individually pledge ourselves to stand firmly together and render all the mutual help possible.

“ 2. That in the event of a dispute hereafter arising between the men and the company in any district, no one of the societies shall take action until the consent of the other three has been obtained.

“ EDWARD HARFORD, London.

HENRY TAIT, Glasgow.

CAMPION WATSON, London.

THOMAS G. SUNTER, Leeds.”

Simple as this proposal was, the Associated Executive forbade their General Secretary to attend any of the meetings of the other societies until they had submitted their proposed scheme for federation to the Executive of that society for approval.

The following is Harford's comment : “ This was rather a cool and cautious request, affording abundant evidence that they had no proposals to make themselves, and had no intention of accepting any agreed to by the other societies, as subsequent events proved. Another conference was arranged for April 11th, but the invitation could not be accepted by the secretary of the Associated for the reason before mentioned.”

The others did, however, and agreed to the following :—

“ In the event of a dispute on any railway affecting the working conditions of either society, a conference of the General Secretaries of the four societies shall be called by the one whose members are mostly affected to decide on the course of action.

“ 2. No strike shall be considered as sanctioned unless three of the said general secretaries are in favour of such taking place.

“ 3. When a strike has been decided upon the four societies shall act in unison to bring it to a successful issue.

“ 4. For the purpose of such joint action a contingency fund shall be established, to which each society shall, in the first place, contribute £1,000, and afterwards a yearly contribution, to be paid over in the month of March of each year, or 4s. per member of the society shown on the returns of the previous December quarter.

" 5. Out of the aforesaid contingency fund the general costs of all movements and disputes shall be paid, except the weekly allowance to men on strike, and for these each society shall be responsible in accordance with its rules.

" 6. Four trustees, one from each society, shall be appointed to take charge of and administer the contingency fund, with the foregoing provisions.

" E. HARFORD.

H. TAIT."

The Scotch society accepted and referred them to the new E.C. The G.R.W.U. dealt with them at its next general meeting. The Associated E.C. replied that they could not accept; and so the good intentions of the A.S.R.S. did not come to the birth. As Harford said of the proposals at the A.G.M. at Birmingham in 1891: "They were simple in character, and in no way intended as a menace, but for the men's defence." All along we have taken the lead towards a closer working, always wishful to make amalgamation complete, as our name implied. Where that could not be done owing to prejudice the best form would have been a working agreement, to pool the strength of all in a conflict, if it came, so as to prevent divided action and failure.

In 1900 a further effort was made with the Associated, and we met with twelve from each side at the Green Dragon, Leeds, January 3rd of that year, a proposal for which was accepted by a Special General Meeting of the A.S.R.S. in that month. That meeting was the most friendly of any in the history of the negotiations. Then, as afterwards, the Associated came with Federation suggestions, whilst the idea of the A.S.R.S. was for amalgamation. Mr. Parfitt, the Chairman of the Conference, gave some little history in good form and kindly spirit, which was reciprocated. The other side, however, kept using the word "enginemen," whilst we used the more expressive word "railwaymen." One of them thought they were going to meet from our side all enginemen, and they federate with a section of our union as enginemen; and so they retired to consider, so they said, the new position.

Sunter said the correspondence clearly proved that their proposal was federation of the two societies. This was accepted, and now Mr. Bell told them that the Amalgamated would not allow it. This was a surprise to him, he said, and they had been brought together under false pretences.

Mr. J. H. Thomas, Swindon, now General Secretary of the N.U.R., regretted that they had come to a block at that early stage of the proceedings, and he hoped when they retired they would take into consideration the feelings of the ranks they represented. He said that the Chairman, Mr. Parfitt, would bear him out that on the G.W. system they were prepared for a federation with all grades, and there was no company in existence where the men suffered more severely from their conditions of labour than those men. They were not discussing their personal views, but were endeavouring to improve the conditions of railwaymen.

They retired, and on returning Mr. Parfitt expressed regret at the circumstances which had arisen with regard to discussing federation with all grades, as they had met to discuss the questions so far as they affected locomen only. It was, however, decided to continue the proceedings with regard to railwaymen generally, only they had to go to their constituents before it could be binding upon them. They had no mandate to draw up anything finally. Our proposals were submitted, and the Associated submitted other proposals. They finally agreed to the following :—

“(a) Any movement affecting all grades of locomen only must receive the sanction of the Executive Committees and be conducted under the joint control of the two General Secretaries, each society bearing the personal expenses of its own delegates, but all other expenses to be borne proportionately.

“(b) All programmes for improved conditions for locomen shall be drawn up at joint meetings of that grade and submitted for the approval of the E.C. of each society. If approved, the movement shall have the full support of each society, as laid down in Clause (a).

“(c) Programmes for improved conditions for grades other than locomen shall be subject to the approval of the E.C. of the A.S.R.S. only, but copies shall afterwards be forwarded to the E.C. of the A.S.L.E. & F., and that society shall be informed of the progress made before its support shall be solicited.

“(d) Should a movement which has been sanctioned in accordance with (a), (b), and (c) be unsuccessful to obtain the conditions asked for, and if it is found necessary to further press the demands by a withdrawal of labour, then the Joint Committee shall be called together and the whole of the facts and circumstances placed before them; and if 75 per cent. of the Joint Committee by their votes recommend the withdrawal of labour, the two E.C.'s must meet jointly to finally decide, and if a strike is resolved upon it shall then be the paramount duty of each society to do all in its power to bring the dispute to a successful issue.

“(e) For the purpose of giving effect to (d), a Joint Committee shall be formed consisting of five enginemen or firemen of the A.S.R.S. and five of the Associated Society, who shall be elected by the respective bodies each year, and the General Secretaries of the two societies. The Joint Committee shall elect a Chairman at the first meeting, the Chairman to be allowed to vote as an ordinary member of the Committee. The two General Secretaries shall act as Joint Secretaries and shall not be allowed to vote.

“(f) In the event of a strike sanctioned in accordance with (d) affecting locomen only, each society shall pay strike allowance to its own members; all other expenses to be borne jointly. A strike in support of one or all grades other than locomen will mean that each society shall pay strike allowance to its own members; but all other expenses shall be borne by the A.S.R.S.

“(g) All demands and programmes submitted to the companies affecting locomen only, or in cases where locomen are concerned in

a movement with other grades, shall be signed by the General Secretaries of the two societies. Demands in programmes in which locomen are not included shall be signed by the General Secretary of the A.S.R.S. only. In all cases where an offer of arbitration is being made, or notices of a strike given to a company or companies, such documents shall be signed by both General Secretaries, whether locomen are concerned or not."

There was a proposition that each society should deposit £10,000 as a guarantee of good faith, but it was withdrawn. They, however, passed the following:—

"Movements sanctioned or commenced by either society before the formation of the Federation shall not be subject to the above rules, excepting (d) and (f)."

Mr. Gough moved the following, which was also passed: "No agreement entered into at this Conference shall be binding until it has been submitted to the societies and voted upon. If the voting is successful then the agreement shall be signed by the secretaries of both societies."

Mr. Gough said he was pleased to see as the result of the Conference that the feeling which had been exhibited for so many years was dying away. The seconder, Mr. Thomas, said that he looked upon the Conference as a red letter day in the railway world.

The E.C. decided that a Special General Meeting should be called to consider the proposals by the branches, and their decisions were to reach the Head Office not later than June 1st. One hundred and fifty-five branches made returns, and the number who took part in the voting at the branches was 4,912, of which 4,136 were in favour, against 668, and neutral 108. Out of 60,000 members this was considered unsatisfactory and deferred the matter till September, asking those branches which had not voted to record their votes, and they refused the expenses of J. H. Thomas for visiting the branches to discuss the matter. Further returns gave the vote in favour 7,160; against, 1,563; neutral, 218. The Associated vote was 1,673 in favour out of a membership of 9,050 members, so that the Associated decided that they could not proceed further. Nothing despairing, another venture was made at the Leeds Trades and Labour Hall on May 18th, 1903, with a different personnel, though it included two each of the old, on the invitation of the A.S.R.S.

At a Special General Meeting in January, 1903, Mr. Sunter having passed away, they passed the following resolution:—

"That the delegates attending the Special General Meeting of the A.S.R.S. are pleased to find a much better feeling now exists between the members of the two societies, and trust that the time is not far distant when a federation or amalgamation of the two societies will take place, and with that object in view we instruct the E.C. to take the matter into consideration at the March sitting of that body."

This meeting was the outcome. There were fourteen on each side besides the two General Secretaries, the Associated Secretary being Mr. A. Fox. Mr. Bell explained how the conference came about, saying, "The old days of antagonism between the two societies, he was pleased to say, had gone by, and the men in both societies wished for a closer friendship to be brought about by their organisations, and he trusted they would become closer." He went on to say the A.S.R.S. view was in favour of amalgamation, but he did not wish them to think they could accept nothing else, that was the maximum. Mr. Fox responded in a hearty speech, which was in favour of federation, though he was careful to say he did not care if they did not federate so long as they agreed to work together. Thomas asked them how far they were prepared to go, as the A.S.R.S. were prepared immediately to go into the question of amalgamation, which was their unanimous expression, but if the Associated thought it too large a question they would go into the question of federation. Mr. Warwick said their only mandate was federation, though he was prepared to discuss both. They had members favourable to federation, others for amalgamation. The decisions were, with minor alterations, the same as those of 1900, only clause (j) being added :—

"(j) A combined meeting of the Executives must be held once in every twelve months to discuss and decide on the policy to be pursued on points both labour and political, and members of both societies shall be at liberty on production of branch cards, to enter either branch-room in any town and to take part in any discussion appertaining to labour or politics."

"On the motion of Thomas and Millington, it was unanimously resolved: 'That we welcome the decision of the general meeting of the A.S.L.E. & F. in endorsing the Federation scheme as agreed to by both E.C.'s, and would urge our A.G.M. to endorse same, as we believe it to be to the best interests of all grades of railwaymen that a closer union should exist between all kindred societies.'"

The Associated also adopted the proposals at their Triennial Conference. The A.G.M. at Peterboro' adopted the proposals, the two E.C. delegates being Thomas and Millington :—

"That the time has now arrived when the question of amalgamation of the whole of the Trade Unions of the country should be taken up in real earnest, and we ask the A.G.M. to instruct the E.C. to take such steps as will ensure the matter being brought prominently before the Trade Unions of Great Britain and Ireland."

The proceedings of the two Conferences were published, and covered twenty-four and twenty-six pages respectively. The Joint Committees formed from the two societies met at the Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, on May 10th, 1904, of which the undermentioned are the findings of forty pages of printed discussions :—

"1. Mr. W. Warwick, A.S.L.E. & F., was unanimously elected chairman.

"2. Mr. W. G. Loraine, A.S.R.S., Vice-Chairman.

" 3. Unanimously resolved : ' That a shorthand note of the proceedings be taken.'

" 4. Mr. Hawkins moved, and Mr. Clarken seconded : ' That this meeting of the two E.C.'s do adopt the principle of a national programme for locomotivemen.' (Carried.)

" Amendment moved by Mr. Rimmer, and seconded by Mr. Dickinson : ' That whilst we recognise the revolutionary changes introduced by the railway companies in recent years, and the consequent effect upon the men who have to work the trains, whose responsibilities are greatly increased thereby, we are of opinion that the programme as submitted by the A.S.L.E. & F. is one upon which, owing to the improbability of the items contained in the programme being granted, we, therefore, cannot assent to the same becoming the national programme for the locomotivemen. Further, in view of a number of movements having been jointly agreed to by the two societies, we consider the time for a discussion of national movement is inopportune.' (Lost.)

" There voted for the amendment 4 ; and for the resolution 17.

" Second amendment moved by Mr. Loraine, and seconded by Mr. Arnold : ' That this joint meeting of the two E.C.'s of the A.S.L.E. & F. and the A.S.R.S., having fully considered the desirability of adopting a national programme for locomen, in consequence of the many innovations that have been made in the working conditions, this meeting is of the opinion that improved conditions are necessary, and urge upon the men to organise to this end, and when this is more complete we will be disposed to reconsider the adoption of a national programme, but in the meantime we are of the opinion that some rearrangement should be immediately made in the conditions of the men working larger engines and trains.' (Lost.)

" There voted for the second amendment 4, and against a large majority.

" The resolution was, therefore, carried.

" 5. Mr. Thomas moved, and Mr. Loxstone seconded, and carried unanimously : ' That this joint meeting, having adopted the principle of a national programme for locomen, decide that a delegate meeting be held for the purpose of drafting a programme, seeing that we have not yet had an opportunity of consulting the locomen, that being in accordance with the rules governing movements.'

" 6. Mr. Taylor moved, and Mr. Beardsley seconded : ' That there be joint meetings at all large centres, and that each society be allowed one delegate to each 100 loco. members.' (Carried.)

" Amendment moved by Mr. Rimmer, seconded by Mr. Dickinson : ' That the election of delegates to a joint conference that may be held between the A.S.L.E. & F. and the A.S.R.S. for the purpose of drawing up a national programme for locomen be left to the rules and administration of the respective societies.' (Lost.)

" There voted for the resolution 14 and for the amendment 8. The resolution was carried.

"7. Mr. Taylor moved, and Mr. Moore seconded: 'That the General Secretaries of the two societies be instructed to at once communicate with the various branches with a view to holding large meetings of enginemen as soon as possible.'

"Another: 'That as soon as the two E.C.'s are satisfied that a sufficient unity of purpose exists in the respective towns or branches the proposed national conference be held.'"

A dispute arose through the variation in policy adopted by the two societies. Our E.C. trusted that the difference would not disturb the harmony which had hitherto prevailed, and that the matter would be approached in a more kindly spirit. It was really a misunderstanding between the two Secretaries.

The Joint Committee met again at Leeds on October 9th, 1904, under clause (j), which said a meeting must be held in each year. The correspondence that had passed between Mr. Fox and Mr. Bell was put in to justify Mr. Fox's contention and to prevent a similar misunderstanding in the future. They then reviewed their respective experiences in the matter of meetings, attendances, and enthusiasm. Mr. Fox gave a rather doleful finding to events, and Mr. Bell said that the meetings had not given anything like the support they ought to have received, but that was the old experience: the work was carried on by the few. He passed on to the newspaper references to big engines, and whether there was less or more strain upon enginemen owing to the bigger engines. The men who felt the strain of these new engines were the very men who did not join any organisation, but they must in spite of them carry on the movement for enginemen. Mr. N. Rimmer, wishful to prevent a futile discussion, proposed a resolution which combated the idea that no strain or extra physical stress was placed upon locomen through bigger engines, which Mr. J. H. Thomas seconded, and in his speech brought in what was happening, of the companies setting grade against grade by "soft sawder," giving increased pay for mileage, and exciting that selfishness which existed in them all. The men on big engines did not suffer pecuniarily, but the others were reduced 1s. per day, and he contended they should educate enginemen to the fact that long hours were disadvantageous to them and lift them above the pounds, shillings, and pence question. They unanimously passed Rimmer's motion and others that dealt with certificates, etc. The proceedings covered 40 printed pages.

A conference was held at the People's Hall, Leeds, on April 11th and 12th, 1905, which was the largest loco. conference that had been held. There were present 158 representatives of the A.S.R.S. and 121 of the Associated. The resolutions passed were:—

"That this Conference of locomotivemen, comprising representatives from all the railways in the United Kingdom, emphasise our opinion that in consequence of the great physical strain placed upon men by the demand of the public for increased facilities in railway travelling, together with changes that are absolutely necessary in

communal and commercial life, as evidenced by the silent revolution taking place upon our railways, we claim that the conditions under which we work call for immediate revision and a curtailment of the hours worked per day."

"Whilst recognising the right of the railway companies to introduce altered methods of locomotion, we deprecate the action of those companies who have adopted electric traction as a motive power in employing one man in the cab instead of two as hitherto, believing it to be inimical to the safety of the travelling public."

"That for the purpose of carrying on this movement as embodied in the programme agreed to by this joint conference, we decide to empower both the Executive Committees to take any step they think necessary, in accordance with rules, to bring this movement to a successful issue."

"That for the purpose of carrying on this movement as embodied in the programme agreed to by this joint conference, we decide to empower both the Executive Committees to take any step they think necessary, in accordance with rules, to bring to a successful issue."

"HOURS.

"That eight hours constitute a day's work for drivers, firemen, motormen, and cleaners, each day to stand by itself, and no man to sign on for less than a day's pay.

"MILEAGE.

"That 150 miles be considered a day's work for express passenger trains, 100 miles for local passengers, goods, and mineral trains if accomplished within eight hours; that all trains running above that distance be paid at the rate of 15 miles per hour for express passenger trains, and ten miles per hour for local passenger, goods, and mineral trains, and that no enginemen or firemen be required to remain on the footplate for a longer distance than 250 miles without an interval of nine hours' rest.

"GUARANTEED WEEK.

"That all drivers and firemen be guaranteed a week's pay exclusive of Sunday.

"WAGES.

"That the rate of pay for firemen be: First year, 3s. 6d.; second year, 4s.; third, fourth, and fifth years, 4s. 6d.; sixth and seventh year, 5s.; eighth year, 5s. 6d.; and that when called on for driving they shall be paid at the minimum rate of pay for driver.

"That cleaners start at 15s. per week, rising to 19s. on attaining the age of 21 if not already passed for firemen, when they shall come under the rate laid down for firemen, and, after having performed 313 days' firing, they shall be entitled to their advance."

There were two proposals for Chairman—Alderman Buckle, of Leeds, and Mr. J. H. Thomas, Swindon, and the voting was: Thomas, 146; Buckle, 130. Mr. Fox was for excluding the Press, but Mr. Bell fought for admittance, and Mr. Rimmer contended "they wanted publicity and daylight above all things." To admit was carried by 131 votes to 126. A perusal of its reports would seem to show that

the A.S.R.S. was to do the reporting one day and the Associated the other. Mr. Bell had arranged, with that same care that attended all his work, to have a full report in the "Railway Review," but the Executive of the Associated decided not to publish the second day's proceedings, and instructed Mr. Fox and the reporter accordingly. Mr. Rimmer was charged by them as having violated the instructions given him at a local conference, but the Wigan Branch repudiated that, and sent a copy of their resolution for publication to the Monthly Journal, to which Mr. Fox sent a reply, putting, as he was wont, too much acid into his ink. This gem is an extract: "It may appear to you all right and to your branch, but you must not lose sight of the fact that whilst, perhaps, Mr. Rimmer claims that he is the only sensible man alive that there are others who have at least as much commonsense as keeps us going, although we cannot hope to get as much as Mr. Rimmer has." He went on to say that a mean advantage had been taken of them in the columns of the "Railway Review" to oppose them tooth and nail and attempting to ridicule them. The reported proceedings occupy 68 pages of a booklet.

One can quite see in the above "the rift in the lute" of federation. That enginemen's conference was in the middle of April, 1905, but by July 21st and 22nd, 1905, the Joint Executives of both societies met at the Essex Hall, Strand, with this agenda: By A.S.R.S.—"Qualification of delegates present, as per Clause (j) of the Federation." By A.S.L.E. & F.—"District Railway Affairs," "Aylesbury Accident," "Certificate Bill (Board of Trade Interview)," "Peasey Cross Affair," "Articles in the 'Railway Review,'" and "National Programme."

Warwick, of the Associated, elected Chairman, said the Federation had not worked as they had hoped. The first stage was the question of report, raised by Bell. Both he and Thomas went into the report question at length, and as Thomas said they could not enter into this business with a feeling of suspicion, it was agreed that Mr. Bussy be the official reporter, although the Associated reporter was there. The proceedings were lively, the correspondence spicy, and at this distant time, one keeps saying, in the reading of it, "Let brotherly love continue." No one with a super-gift of condensation could reduce to any sensible brevity 188 pages of our E.C. minutes' size, but that will enable my readers to see that the questions were deep and far-reaching. They concerned Mr. Bell's vices in dealing with the District Railway affairs; they concerned, from the Associated side, in both, the virtues of Mr. Fox. Reading that and the evidence of W. Foot, of West Brompton, who, we all knew, did not love the Associated, but knew the facts more than any other man—because Bill was no idler, no casual observer of things; he knew, saw, felt, and said things—placed his facts and pieced them and blew their contentions into thin air, as we children used to do with thistledown.

With regard to the Aylesbury accident, everyone knows, or if they do not they must have lived in a world apart from the ordinary run

of humanity, that John Dobson, with consummate skill, gained the necessary information about the accident,* and his achievements here are among the best of the many good services he rendered to enginemen altogether apart from any organisation.

With regard to the Certificate Bill, we advocated it before the Associated had come into the railway world, had never ceased advocating it, and we should do no deed, speak no word, but that would help it onward. J. Holmes, our Organiser, with that watchful eye and listening ear of his, heard of the charges against Bell, which said that but for him there would have been two motormen, and not the "dead" handle.

Mr. Holmes wrote Bell as follows :—

"I gathered when at Trowbridge from an Associated man that Fox had issued a circular to all his branches repeating the charges re motormen on the Electric Railways. I could not get a circular, but you can take it for granted the men were in a state of ferment. I read the secretary your letter, and told them Fox was a liar."

Bell had no difficulty, with witnesses, in confirming that his action was right and just, and that there was no neglect.

Again, in the same way, Wardle was able to dispose of the case against himself, and that he only gave facts about the Aylesbury disaster and John Dobson's part in it, and denied what was attributed to the latter by Thirtle, of Stratford, at a conference at Cricklewood.

No federation could live and thrive on things like these.

During December, 1906, Mr. Bell issued a dozen-page pamphlet, our E.C. minutes size, dealing with all the charges against him. It is laden with extracts from speeches and from the Associated's journal; and each false charge is nailed to the counter with sure strokes. Federation matters, the North-Eastern movement, the Cudworth accident, a speech by Fox at Derby and one at Newport, and a leaflet issued by Fox in August, 1906, were successively dealt with. The leaflet is a gem in its way, and the various letters written by Fox and inserted in their organ can only charitably be judged with the opinion that Fox suffered from a sluggish liver, and tried to take it out of others by the prompting of a physical infirmity. The following are the closing words of Fox's leaflet: "After thirty-four years' trial, we contend that the idea of organising all grades of railwaymen in one society is a failure; nay, it is an impossibility. Human nature and the very great differences in the various sections make it so."

As an answer, we put in as evidence the solid achievements from 1914 to 1921, and leave it at that.

Just previous to the issue of Mr. Bell's circular a meeting of the joint body was held at Essex Hall on November 23rd, 1906, and after the correspondence had been read and Messrs. Moore and Turner had spoken Mr. Bell proceeded to address the meeting. Mr. Moore raised

See "Life of J. H. Dobson."

a point of order, and the Chairman, J. R. Bell, of the A.S.R.S., had ruled in Bell's favour. As the Associated delegates proceeded to leave, Mayes said: "Gentlemen, surely you are not going to leave like that?" Then the following ensued: "Fox: I want to say— Rimmer: I object to anything being said from any side until Mr. Bell has had his say. We are not going to be insulted." The Associated delegates then withdrew, but not before Bell had fired this Parthian shot at the retreating host: "I do not want to say anything in the absence of these gentlemen, but I will say this in their presence, that the statements contained in their report and the pamphlet referred to on this agenda are libellous, untruthful, and malicious—(An Associated member: 'Liar')—and we must put that before the railwaymen of this country—(An Associated member: 'Traitor!')—I desire to do it in the presence of these people, and now that they decline to do it, we shall have to do otherwise." The Chairman then ended the proceedings.

Other people, however, were more amenable to reason. The next conference was held at Deansgate Hotel, Manchester, on October 5th and 19th, and was called at the instance of the Points-men and Signal-men's Society, who invited the five other societies, which included the Railway Telegraph Clerks' Association, who could not attend, and Mr. Williams was present as holding a brief for the A.S.R.S. There was a lengthy correspondence read, and a very wide discussion as to whether Mr. Williams should be allowed to remain. Mr. Chorlton made a very statesmanlike speech, and that of Mr. Walkden was better still. Mr. Moore, of the Associated, and Mr. Bradshaw, of the G.R.W.U., threw some sand into the bearings of the machinery, and Messrs. Chorlton and Walkden put it right. So the debate swung round whether Mr. Williams be admitted or not. Mr. Walkden said: "Surely Mr. Bell is not the A.S.R.S. I am sure I am not the R.C.A. But will it not very badly prejudice our proceedings to-day by excluding the only man they could send in an informal way. He is a very good man, and nothing will be gained by excluding him. I ask you to cease personalities, and decidedly I differ from Mr. Moore." As we read Mr. Williams' speech we are "listening to the voice that is still." The point was that Mr. Williams could not come without the authority of the E.C. or A.G.M., and he could not pledge his E.C. We are listening to that voice: "I am sorry that in the introduction of the subject Mr. Moore has thought it wisdom to go back upon the failures of the past. Goodness bless me, if we are not to benefit by the failures of the past we cannot endeavour to strike out new lines and benefit by experience. I admit that friction has existed in the past, but I am not prepared to admit that we have been the creators of that friction. You see how indiscreet it is to raise controversial points, when I thought we were coming here to rub off the knots of those difficulties, and were endeavouring to co-operate on a smooth basis that we may avoid them in the future—I did anticipate that we were coming here leaving all our little feelings behind us."

The Associated whenever they came up against a difficulty had to withdraw, and it was quite patent that the manœuvre had been discussed

before, else why withdraw, or were they so slow-witted that they could not decide without deliberation? They did withdraw the resolution and substituted an innocuous one. On the second day the A.S.R.S. was officially represented by Messrs. J. H. Thomas, A. Bellamy, G. Spencer, T. Topping, G. Thaxton, and Bell. The Parliamentary Committee had asked to be present, and they were allowed, and took part in the discussion. Our A.G.M. at Middlesbro' had unanimously passed the following resolution:—

“That in reply to the appeal from the West of England District Council and other branches re federation, whilst we regret the failure of the present scheme as a result of the A.S.L.E. & F. who have failed to carry out the principle of the federation scheme of 1903, we desire to say that having received an appeal from the conference held at Manchester on the 6th October, we welcome the effort now being made for a closer union between all railway societies, but regret the invitation was not received in sufficient time to be placed before our members for a mandate to be given to this conference. We nevertheless decide to appoint representatives to attend the conference at Manchester on October 19th, and instruct them to report the result of such conference to the Executive Committee of this society. The latter body shall have full power to deal with questions arising out of the existing Federation between this society and the A.S.L.E. & F. as the circumstances may warrant, but any proposal dealing with the question of a General Federation must be referred to the members for their sanction.”

So that they went with authority. It must be understood that this was during the time of the agitation for recognition and the programme when a ballot was being taken to consider a strike, and that was why the Parliamentary Committee attended. A committee was formed to draft a scheme of federation and passed another “demanding the elementary rights of all Trade Unions to collective bargaining and the consequent right of being represented in all their trade disputes by their own duly elected officials.” And having agreed to the principle of official recognition decided that no further deputations be appointed to wait on the officials or directors unless accompanied by an official representative. So far so good, but the very next day Mr. Fox made a speech at the Euston Theatre in which he violated both the spirit and letter of the decisions arrived at by the conference. Our E.C. thanked the Parliamentary Committee for their effort to bring the two bodies—the Associated and ourselves—together, and regretted that it did not meet with the success it deserved. Mr. Fox's speech drove us still further apart. He actually said the national programme would mean a reduction for enginemen. An astounding statement to make, to imply that nearly 300 enginemen who passed it from both sides were something worse than fools. Enginemen's own hands fashioned and made it, and if it had meant that, upon their own head would have been judgment. He was wrong. Our E.C. passed this resolution upon both matters with a unanimous vote:—

“Moved by Rimmer and Brodie: ‘That, after a careful review of the circumstances in connection with the proposed federation of railway

societies and the meetings of the representatives of the societies held in Manchester on October 5th and 19th, this Committee is of opinion that in consequence of the breach of the understanding arrived at at the adjourned conference on October 19th by the Associated Society the following day, at the Euston Theatre, London, and the breach of confidence by the issue of a circular to the members of the United Pointsmen and Signalmen's Mutual Aid and Sick Society by the general secretary of that body reflecting upon the action of this society, the two societies in question have forfeited our confidence and placed themselves and their actions open to question by the Trade Unionists of the country, as represented at the Trades Union Congress. We, therefore, cannot move any farther in the matter until that body has had an opportunity of considering the circumstances in connection with the same, and instruct our General Secretary to inform the representative of the sub-committee appointed to draft a scheme that we cannot proceed farther at present with the negotiations. This society still adheres to the principle and the offer made by us for the amalgamation of the existing railway societies as the only solution of the difficulties."

The next great venture—great because all along in this chapter we have had to omit effort after effort to bring railwaymen together—was after the strike of 1911, when the Associated, G.R.W.U., the Signalmen's Society acted together and showed their strength. This Conference of the four societies was held at the Albion Hotel, Manchester, December 28th to 30th, 1911. Our side was represented by Messrs. Williams (who had become General Secretary), Bellamy, Niven, and Cramp. Mr. Bellamy, who was elected Chairman, gave an excellent lead in his opening speech. The first obstructing point was that they were bound by the decisions of the Joint Committees; but all, with the exception of the Associated, made statesmanlike speeches. They were prepared to take their courage in their hands—whether for federation, amalgamation, or fusion—and come to an agreement. The Associated were empowered to discuss federation, and federation only. Mr. Fox, their secretary, said their conference was triennial, and the 1909 one had bound them. He said he was a sectional man, and such he would remain, and that amalgamation was an impossibility. Cramp urged that as leaders they should lead and do something to bring the unions together. Each of the other parties thought, and said, that events had changed. They had made history during the year, and they should go on making history in the same form as in August last. Mr. Fox put in the federation scheme, which in essence is in this chapter. The A.S.R.S. put forward a scheme for the fusion of forces, which the Conference went into clause by clause, till they came to the question of amalgamation and fusion, and then representatives of the Associated regretted that they could take no further part in the Conference.

The discussion was good-tempered and courteous, and the Chairman was splendidly tactful. But the Associated withdrew, and the Conference went on to deal with the first clause, which was as follows: "On and after a date to be hereinafter agreed there shall be established

an organisation which shall be entitled the 'National Union of Railwaymen.' " A scheme was beaten out and agreed upon. The ballot was not in the first case successful with us, but the necessary vote was obtained. The A.G.M. reaffirmed its faith in all sections of railwaymen being in one society, and instructed the E.C. to complete their labours for fusion at the earliest possible moment. The rules drawn up were accepted, with a few modifications, at a Special General Meeting on February 10th and four following days; and March 29th, 1913, was the date fixed for the fusion of the three bodies—the A.S.R.S., the G.R.W.U., and the U.P.S.S.—under the title of the "National Union of Railwaymen." So the old A.S.R.S. as a name passes out of history, but in its new form, like John Brown's soul, goes marching on.

The Railway Clerks' Association was not in this. During January, 1918, this body issued a booklet, in which were given the negotiations with the National Union of Railwaymen in respect of the conditions under which the two unions might amalgamate. Its annual meeting had passed the following resolution:—

"That this conference instructs the E.C. to enter immediately into negotiations with the National Union of Railwaymen to consider conditions under which the two unions could amalgamate, and then issue full particulars of such conditions to all members of the R.C.A."

The thirty-page booklet gives the gist of the speeches, which had given no definite indication of the wishes of the conference, so far as terms were concerned. It goes into the basis for negotiations under three groups and deals with the history of the formation of their association, when some clerks were called upon officially to discontinue their membership of the A.S.R.S., which, they say, we officially appeared to have acquiesced in the companies' contention, and they quote some remarks of Mr. Bell's, which would appear to support their contention. But Mr. Bell said: "We do not say he shall not join; do not forget that." The same companies also objected to the R.C.A. acting jointly with the railway Trade Unions. So it appears they accept the companies' contention of splendid isolation, which makes it worse than the Associated, because theirs was by their own choice. It went even farther. Mr. Baldwin, M.P., pleaded that clerks in positions of authority or special authority should be debarred from membership in the R.C.A.; but they succeeded in getting that embargo removed. The R.C.A. further says the N.U.R. still more recently relinquished its claims to the railway police, it goes on to damn fusion, and holds out—terror of terrors—having to strike. Their position as clerks was "entirely different," the N.U.R. flat rate could not appeal to them. "We do not consider it suitable for application in the case of the clerical staff." "Our policy cuts across the general policy of the R.C.A.," and so the Conciliation Board methods, the Triple Alliance, other unions. Then follows the correspondence, with the very "friendly character" of the joint meeting at Unity House on November 9th, 1917, after which eighteen letters passed. In paragraph numbered 90, they say: "We would

again emphasise the fact that fusion between the R.C.A. and the N.U.R. is in no way comparable to the fusion which took place in 1913 between the A.S.R.S., G.R.W.U., and the U.P.S.S. The question which arises was not present in theirs, and we are thoroughly convinced from our further investigations into the matter that from a practicable point of view it is preferable that the R.C.A. should continue to carry out its own work in its own way." So they recommended that no further steps be taken at present; so that we R.C.A. should continue to carry out its own work in its own way." So they recommended that no further steps be taken at present; so that we still have two sectional unions in the railway workers' world. If the luxury of a comment is allowed me, I should say this is a document that does not reflect much credit on the part of the R.C.A. Their apologetic tone seems to suggest that they are not a Trade Union at all, but merely an association.

This is the latest—but will not be the last—effort for one union :—

"RE FUSION OF RAILWAY TRADE UNIONS.

"Unity House, Euston Road, London,

"March 20th, 1922.

"Mr. J. Bromley, General Secretary, A.S.L.E. & F., London, N.W.

"Dear Mr. Bromley,—At a Special General Meeting held on March 18th I was instructed to approach you with a view to the fusion of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, the Railway Clerks' Association, and this union. In the judgment of our conference the immediate problems confronting the railwaymen are of so serious a character that it is essential in the interests of everyone concerned there should be only one union catering for railwaymen henceforth. If you can agree to this principle and the practicability of putting it into effect at the earliest possible moment, I shall be glad if you will so advise me, and I will then take steps to bring about a meeting between representatives of the three bodies concerned, with a view to giving practical effect to such decision.

"Yours faithfully,

"(Signed) C. T. CRAMP."

"Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen,

"Head Offices : 9, Arkwright Road, Hampstead, N.W. 3.,

"March 23rd, 1922.

"Dear Sir,—Your letter of March 20th, Reference O.1,955, has been considered by my Executive Committee, who have passed the following resolution thereon :—

"That, in reply to Mr. Cramp's invitation to attend a meeting to consider the question of fusion of this society with the N.U.R. and R.C.A., this E.C. cannot agree to attend a

meeting with such an object in view, and have no intention of departing from a policy which has served so well the interests of the locomotivemen in this country to the mutual advantage of themselves and other grades in the railway service; and we would take this opportunity of stating that, when the same earnestness is manifested by the N.U.R. for co-operation or federation with this society as exists for fusion, this E.C. will still be pleased to extend the hand of fellowship with the object of safeguarding the interests of all concerned.

“ ‘ We are still prepared to consider a scheme of federation which provides for separate and distinct autonomy for each organisation.’

“ Yours faithfully,

“ (Signed) J. BROMLEY (per J. W.),

“ General Secretary.

“ C. T. Cramp, Esq., National Union of Railwaymen.”

Chapter XXVII.

THE LAST YEAR.

WE have already dipped into our last year, which partakes of all the excitement, labours, and stress of the last six. In looking through the records, the efforts and the resolutions concerning shopmen are studded everywhere. There is not an E.C. meeting in which they fail to appear, and one can only think that the Executive and its officers must have been wearied to death in the long difficult road they had to travel. Unemployment was rife, railway dismissals were many, and the financial burdens grew, and the union's assets diminished. Youths of 18 were cast adrift because they were classed as adults. The signalmen's question caused equal anxiety. But amid all, the governing body never wearied in their efforts to find a solution to the shopmen's question. If we had but a clear road we could have made progress and reached the desired terminus. The craft unions declined to let us do as we would—to negotiate jointly. They were invited to meet us and discuss frankly the whole question, but the deadlock continued. We piped, but they failed to dance; we mourned, but they would not lament. The adjourned annual meeting appointed from among themselves five, two from the E.C., with the President and the Industrial General Secretary, to meet them to try yet once more to make a bridge. The parties met, but again that stiff, unbending attitude. We suggested arbitration as a means of settlement. Mr. Cramp wrote the A.E.U. a lengthy letter, in which he conveyed the decision of the Congress, and that such a dispute in the Labour world should not continue without an effort to settle it and without enlarging the boundary of the dispute. “. . . I am therefore to suggest that you would agree with us that the course outlined should be taken, and that we should jointly approach some mutually agreed upon person who would be likely to be impartial in this matter, and who would be of assured standing in the Labour world, with a view to a speedy settlement of the dispute. It cannot be in the interest of either of us that the matter be indefinitely prolonged or that the unedifying spectacle of an internal dispute in the world of Labour should be displayed to the capitalistic Press.” He further asked them to forward names which their union considered would be acceptable as arbitrator.

Tom Mann wrote that his E.C. had considered the matter, and whilst appreciating the suggestion of arbitration as a means of overcoming the difficulties, but having regard to the Engineering and Shipbuilding Federation, they thought they ought to consult that body. In the meantime the boilermakers' district rates were being held up as a result. Frank Smith, of the Engineering and Shipbuilding Federation,

wrote later to the effect that they had considered the question, and he referred us to the decision of the Trades Union Congress of 1915, which did not touch this question. The E.C. did not care to accept arbitration, but the Special General Meeting accepted the proposal of arbitration, but opposed district rates. It was referred to a court of arbitration, and we prepared our plans and submitted our programme. But even the arbitration court was a long while getting to work, and time and again we had to protest against the inordinate delay. So that the members might know that the governing body was not idle, Mr. Cramp was instructed to draft and issue in pamphlet form the efforts that had been made. Terms of reference for discussion and negotiation had been agreed upon between ourselves and the general managers, the Ministry of Transport interviewed, and later the managers asked for a meeting to discuss a reduction of wage corresponding to that agreed upon with the Engineering Employers' Federation and the craft unions. We met all parties on August 9th, and after a prolonged discussion, it was agreed that shopmen's wages were to be reduced 6s. as from August 15th. Lines Committees and shopmen's conferences were held, so that they might discuss the whole range of difficulties.

The Scottish companies, which had never taken kindly to any new thing, right from the period of the new order of things, commencing with conciliation, had reduced the men's wages $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and bonus $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Protests were made, meetings held, and correspondence bandied about between the Ministry of Transport, the companies, and the craft union's Federation, but the companies were not prepared to go to arbitration unless all parties were represented. If shopmen read the E.C. minutes of December they would have seen the long, drawn-out efforts and seen mirrored the intentions and activities and the results. Certainly the shopmen could not, with reason, complain of any neglect, and the weary, disheartening path the E.C. had to tread must have been a tax upon their well-known religious susceptibilities.

Ireland has many a dark page in our national history, chiefly through the follies of those who govern. They cut across our own history, from their entry into the society to our last page. Both the north and south gave each their meed. In both there were disturbances which affected Labour, but the outstanding disturbance was that at Mallow. Thomas promptly took the matter up. Before describing it, a digression must be made, and then the matter can afterwards be seen in its true relationship, with Mr. Thomas's effort.

I am not given to undeserved flattering titles, nor has one solitary word, thought, or deed been suggested by Mr. Thomas for these pages, or any embargo placed upon the writer. The sins, virtues, inadvised placings or omissions are mine alone. Here in the Mallow case he was prompt—that is one of his virtues. He seems to have that swift, sure intuition of the need of the hour and the way of making effort. On public questions he would make a speech and assist in thought leading, whilst other people were consulting their minds. He

caught the public ear before it was filled with other noises and discordant sounds, and so became thought-forming. He has not only intuitive perception, but confidence in his own judgment, and he who has that makes the best use of inherent mental qualities. "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel," can never be affixed to him. He uses the prejudices, words, speeches of his opponents, or those he negotiates with, and crowns his king owing to misplaced pawns. He can coax into admissions or argue into consent. He can be diplomatic, now soft and winsome as a cooing dove, or a flash of indignation, real or assumed. He has learned that diplomacy both aids and strengthens and may be superior to strength. He seeks to win by conviction rather than achieve by force, by which you can gain a friend, make smoother passages and garner larger results. He can separate the immediate from the remote, can see the need of the hour, as well as the length of journey and probable terminus, and provide for both. He would say: "This is my road, I shall take it, and I shall arrive," and he does. If a deed wants doing he does it, whether it is for friend or foe. No subject is too small, no effort too great. That mental subjectivity of his is the passport to success, and so he thwarted opponents and heartened friends, and he has always, even in the most difficult passages, come out on top. He never followed the crowd and then called himself leader. He would edge in home thrusts in a speech in good-natured banter. He always paid, at least, lip service, to the public needs, and on one occasion he said, in effect: "This is for the mutual benefit of the public and yourselves, but if I believed it would be to the public disadvantage, I would oppose it as heartily as I now espouse it." Had he been asked how he would square that with his support of the Tube Parliamentary Bill, or the money paid to the railway companies when de-controlled, the ready answer would have been given. In all speeches that I have read, for plain, vigorous, outspoken language a public speech at the A.G.M. at Newcastle probably ranks as the highest. Only the pile of printers' proofs restrains me, but I may add his own weakness is a defect of nature—if such it can be called—in his emotional tendencies, which are nerve-racking and physically wearying. These things are said as illustrating Mallow, Abermule, and the Scotch Wages Board proceedings.

Mallow, then. Not only did he call the E.C. together, but in Parliament he raised the issue, reviewing the larger reprisal games of the Government at the same time. On the 29th of January Captain King and his wife were shot near Mallow Station. The wife, to save her husband, rushed in front of him, with the result that both she and her husband were wounded. He did not minimise the dastardly deed, but he showed what disadvantages railwaymen had to suffer under the Curfew Order, and how a driver who brought his train in could not go home, and a signalman whose term of duty had expired had to remain in his box. The police, in this case, came to the signal box, ordered the occupants to put up their hands, marched them to the platform, and then to the barracks. In the morning they were

taken out of their cell, beaten with fists, rifles, and revolvers, and told to carry the dead body of a woman from a military motor to the cell. They were then told to run, and while doing so they were fired on, three being shot dead. Another party who had come on duty just before were ordered to the police barracks with their hands above their heads, then to double, afterwards to run, and Meagher and Morrissey, a signalman, were shot, and an engine driver, one of the wounded men, died, leaving a widow and seven children, with the expected birth of another.

Mr. Thomas asked for an inquiry. Bromley, with his righteous indignation, was for taking more drastic action, but his proposal was suspended in favour of an inquiry. Never did an Organiser—and that our youngest in appointment—ever present so clear and at the same time so damning a report as that which Harris presented as the result of the inquiry. Not only did he tell of the outrages upon life and limb, but of the thieving of these guardians of law and order. Questions were asked in the House of Commons, and the main questions were followed by supplementary ones, these being fired continually. Mr. Thomas sent out a circular showing what had been done, and the Associated Executive withdrew their strike notices, and the farcical inquiry proceeded. It was farcical in that we were not allowed to be represented, and the full truth was not given. Promptness in word and deed was a feature of the case. How little cause Irishmen have to love Great Britain! But, then, they have the union.

The collision at Abermule was like that of the Great Eastern at Thorpe on September 10th, 1874—a head-to-head one—and the causes somewhat similar. The following is the report presented to the E.C.:—

“COLLISION AT ABERMULE.

“In connection with this sad accident, which occurred on the 26th January last, you will doubtless be aware that Mr. J. Holmes, Mr. A. J. Williams, Mr. E. Browning, Organising Secretaries, were at once sent over to the place where the accident occurred in order to make the necessary inquiries and arrange for the members concerned to be represented at the Ministry of Transport inquiry and the inquest. I regret to say that G. Jones, driver, and B. W. Evans, fireman, who were working the slow train, were both killed. The other members concerned were P. Jones, driver, J. Owen, fireman, who were working the fast train, F. Lewis, stationmaster, T. G. Jones, signalman, E. P. Rogers, porter, H. S. Humphreys, signalman, and J. Brook, station foreman. Mr. J. Holmes represented our members at the Ministry of Transport inquiry, and, as you are aware, Mr. J. H. Thomas and Mr. J. Holmes represented our members at the inquest. Mr. J. Holmes' report gives all the details in connection with the accident, and I cannot do better than give you a copy of same, which reads as follows:—

“The head-on collision by two passenger trains happened on the Cambrian Railway on January 26th between Abermule and Newtown, seventeen persons killed or since died, and sixteen more or less seriously

injured. The Ministry of Transport inquiry, and later the inquest, revealed startling evidence. This is a single line worked on the electric tablet principle, and reveals once again that no matter what mechanical precautions are adopted, the human element will always step in. No blame in this case can be laid on the tablet instruments, the human factors being wholly at fault. There was strong evidence that the confusion which brought about the disaster is attributable to divided responsibility. The tablet instruments are in the stationmaster's office, the signal box on the opposite side of the station, whilst the ground frame is nearly 300 yards away, this ground frame slotting the points and signals, between which there is no telephone. Two persons are only supposed to work the instruments, but, as a matter of fact, four often do so. On the morning in question, Rogers, the 17-year-old porter, released the tablet for the up express, went to his ground frame cabin to set the points and never mentioned to anyone that he had given permission to Newtown to let the express come forward. Meantime the down train ran into the station. These two trains are booked to pass at Abermule. The signalman had dealt with the down slow on the instruments, the porter with the up fast, the acting stationmaster being absent for the minute, and the 15-year-old clerk took the tablet from the down slow train, meeting the acting stationmaster between the doors in the booking hall, handed the tablet to him with the remark, 'The down train is going on.' The assistant stationmaster then handed the tablet to the fireman of the down train, which was the same tablet that had just been handed to the boy clerk. It was frankly admitted by Lewis, the acting stationmaster, if he had looked at the tablet he would have seen at once that it was the wrong tablet. The driver and the fireman of this down train are both unfortunately dead, but they would, had they looked at the tablet, have seen it was the wrong one; but they did not do so, hence the mistake. At this time the up express had left Newtown and the down train had left Abermule, and the two trains met head-on at a curve in the line. Neither could see more than 200 yards at most. The down train does not seem to have ever noticed the up train at all and must have met with full steam on. The up train, however, did see the down train, the driver and fireman jumping off, and by doing this they saved their lives, although both the poor fellows are in hospital and the driver very seriously injured.

"Fortunately, all the men on duty, except the boy clerk, were our members, so there was no divided representation between any other unions, an object lesson that will, I hope, not be lost sight of. We took the evidence at the first inquiry, Colonel Pringle representing the Ministry of Transport, on Saturday and Sunday, after viewing the scene of the accident, sitting until late on Saturday and all day on Sunday. I had Mr. Williams, of Cardiff, who was in possession of the facts, also Mr. Browning. Both Colonel Pringle and the company's officials gave me every freedom, and so we got to the root of the matter. I at once saw the gravity of the case, and at once travelled up to London, laid

the facts before Mr. Thomas and Mr. Cramp, and they decided at once that Mr. Thomas should go down with me to attend the inquest. This Mr. Thomas did, and the reports in the Press will enable our members to see the wisdom of this. The inquest was held at Newtown, and lasted two days. One had to be there to realise the immense sensation created, the whole Press of the country being represented, the verdict adding to the excitement. This, at first, was gross neglect, and the Coroner stated it amounted to manslaughter against Lewis and Jones, the foreman of the jury agreeing. But Mr. Thomas at once intervened and challenged the Coroner, that if the jury meant that they must say gross negligence amounting to manslaughter. This was the most intense moment of the whole inquiry. To realise it one had to be there. The jury retired, and reversed their verdict to gross negligence, deserving of the severest censure. This verdict was accepted by the Coroner, and thus ended the most momentous inquest and inquiry I have ever attended.

“The Cambrian general manager publicly admitted their financial liability to the dead and injured, and also agreed to remove the tablet instruments from the stationmaster’s office into the signal box and place them under the charge of the signalman. There are many other places, both on the Cambrian and other railways, where the tablet instruments are not in the signal boxes. There can be no doubt, to my mind, that this leads to loose working. You cannot have divided responsibility without additional risks, and that fact that in all new workings in this direction the instruments are placed in the boxes, is the best proof that this should apply to both old and new. The only question is one of expense, but any cost would be cheaper than such accidents as this. I am not placing the blame for this calamity on the railway company, as I am fully aware that if the rules had been carried out the accident would not have happened. But safety first, a statement the Cambrian advertises on their workings, applies to more than the men. If it means anything, it means reducing the possibility of human failure to the lowest possible minimum. This accident, and the inquiries following, once again show to railwaymen the advantage of a common union. One is struck by the different attitude of the company’s officials now as compared with the attitude of similar officials, say, at the Hawes Junction inquiry, which I attended. I have nothing but respect for the Cambrian officials in this inquiry, from the general manager downwards. Mr. Warwick, the superintendent of the line, was most open and candid in the witness box, and right through they laid their cards on the table, both to Colonel Pringle, the Coroner, and the N.U.R. representatives. The chairman of the board of directors, Mr. D. Davies, attended the inquest. I thanked them for their courtesy at the inquiry, and Mr. Thomas, in a few graceful words, did the same on behalf of ourselves and the men, and thus ended one of the most serious inquiries in English railway history.”

When the railway companies did as they would, and when accidents were frequent and railway employé’s lives were regarded as but an incident in railway life, it was suggested that if a few railway directors

met a similar fate it would hasten reform. Lord Herbert Vane Tempest, of the Cambrian directors, was killed in this collision, but it cannot be said that he or his colleagues in this case were to blame, and the system was regarded as "fool-proof."

Mr. J. Holmes has mirrored for us the excitement of the countryside in the inquiry, and railwaymen read the Press with eagerness and watched with interest the points raised. The verdict was "Gross neglect," which the Coroner interpreted as manslaughter against Lewis and Jones, the foreman of the jury agreeing.

Here Mr. J. H. Thomas, with that resourceful intelligence we have just stated, intervened to say that they must give their view of that, as gross negligence must not be interpreted as manslaughter. The jury, therefore, reconsidered, and gave their verdict "Gross negligence, deserving the severest censure."

There was a short article in the "Railway Review" headed "Jim Thomas, Comrade," by "A.E.R.," that expressed the universal sentiment of railwaymen. I cull the first and last two paragraphs:—

"Grumpy, impatient, curse-all capitalists soul that mine is, I am not in the habit of throwing bouquets of praise about. But to-day, Mr. Editor, I beg of you to allow me to publicly present to the Right Hon. Jim Thomas a dinky little bunch of red internationals as my appreciation of a recent comrade-like act.

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"And along the line from that little out-of-the-way place in Wales there flashes into his understanding soul something of the agony and mental stress of those insignificant N.U.R. men and the dependents. . . What was it being said about courts of justice? And I fancy I can hear Jim Thomas—not Right Hon. LL.D. M.P., but just plain Jim Thomas, ex-driver and good comrade, quietly deciding 'I'll go down.'

"Now say, you carping critics and revolutionary extremists, who never tire of running down a man that wisely prefers the ballot to the bullet, do you not appreciate the comradeship of that wonderfully human 'I'll go down'? Can you not see that alleged 'fakir' intently playing his part in that great drama from which those erring comrades of ours walked out censured—but to their homes? Grousing, ballot and bullet firebrand that I am, gladly do I pay tribute to the excellence of Jim Thomas, comrade."

The writer has the imaginative touch that would often save us from criticism if all had it, and there would be appreciation instead; and if imagination was ours, save from despair, give us hope, and make us thoughtful. I lift my hat to the writer, and if he is the A. E. Rochester who in a later article described what Mr. Thomas did for a soldier during the war, twice will that hat do service.

This incident, which was of outstanding service to railwaymen and redounded so much to Mr. Thomas's credit, transpired not in the calm days of leisure and of inglorious ease, but in days of stress, of special

E.C.'s and S.G.M.'s, of conflicting negotiations, and a hundred other matters demanding personal attention and decision.

In the midst of it all, he went to Tottenham and presented to the lovable and loved J. H. Dobson and his wife the branch's gift on the occasion of their Jubilee celebration. At the same time another book was issued by Mr. Thomas, which went into all the silent revolutions that had and were taking place, and were yet to come. Other publications also comprise Levi Hooton's "Branch Officer," companion and ready reckoner, in which the author's practical mind and pen come to the assistance of arduous workers in our cause; and that flyleaf of history, centred in the person of J. H. Dobson.

Our printed records of 1921 are crowded with events, thought, resolutions, deeds. What page can bear a tithe of them! Youths signing documents which would give away well-fought victories, control of railways, short time, unemployment, levies; signalmen expecting, with the ripe fruit of findings, yet debarred from the eating. Patience, my old craft workers, your day will come. In the golden pages of our history you have done much, reaped much. Patience is a root virtue, and your reward is ahead.

Elections grace the page. The winning triumph of Dudley by Wilson, who, modest man withal, would not be persuaded by the blandishments of Willet Ball, to furnish a biography for his workshop. And Heywood! Who thought Halls would win it? Men who do not bet on anything said they would bet that he would not, yet in their hearts hoped he would.

So in one year we doubled our railway Parliamentary representation. And we think of Accrington Branch's motion at an A.G.M. in the 'eighties: "That we take no further part in politics," of the vagaries of Barrister Sutherst, who led the 'busmen's strike in the 'nineties, and whose daughter married Lord Townsend, and who forgot to pay the debt due to us in his Liverpool contest.

We see in the closing year of our Jubilee income tax questions, standard uniforms as well as standard wages, branch audits considered, a mounting overdraft with our Co-operative Wholesale Bankers, till it reached £255,000, the highest it has soared, the longest time it has stood against us, and oh, so slowly descending; agreements with electrical workers, Irish outbursts, embargoes designed to help the miners, which somehow would not be embargoed, our men, men of other callings, dismissed because they obeyed Executive authority, whilst others refused, and rendered good intentions nugatory, with other difficulties inherent to the case; Unity House enlarged, which some thought was due to lack of vision, and to the days of darkness that should be many, that less, not more, room would be required; questions of an unwieldy Executive, and sectional at that, contrary to our spirit and practice, that know no grade, and threats of diminution; a leader with an uttered burst of pessimism—a fault this; the hearts of others failing them for fear lest achievements made, and dreams in the offing,

should be made dust—but “out of whole heart cometh hope.” Economy is in the air, suggestions of wider federation. Do not let us forget that there are limits even to organisation, and more limitations still to force; that reason must play its part and do its work, however great our strength. Let us remember also that ignorance and mistrust is our enemy; that whilst we make history we must not overlook its lessons.

Almost the last page of our history is one to be proud of. The leadership of Messrs. Thomas and Cramp was tested on the Scottish Wage Board, and was not found wanting. Whether in the excellent speech of Cramp or the skilful cross-examination of Thomas, it was a splendid feat, and never, perhaps, was our organ, the “Railway Review,” read with more eagerness and avidity than in the record of its proceedings. Ireland, as we part company with our History, is gloomy. We know not what a day may bring forth, but up to now nationalism has triumphed, and there is the disposition—may it be kept!—not to unduly harass those who stand at the edge of the old order and are looking forward to and shaping the new.

FINIS.

Such are the years of its unfolded and unfolding history. To the present writer it has been a pleasant task. The facts collated are but fragments of wider facts, because the greatest difficulty has been what to omit and what to place on record. But even the recorded facts do not explain all. You have to view the history with imagination. Who is there who could thrust into a few lines the work of years, or reduce to print the atmosphere of our association? Side by side with the slow but sure gains of Labour ideals there have been the brotherhood workings in their outflow to those in need. With two others I have for many years watched the outflow of cheques to those whose active deeds of life on a railway were ended; to those whom the irony of fate required legal assistance through some mischance or error of judgment—perhaps neglect of vision. It has sent its measures of practical sympathy into many a home from which the breadwinner has gone, and has “caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy, and the blessings of him that was ready to perish” have gone up from many a heart because their own thoughtfulness and that of others had led to active association with their fellows. Standing in the position I did by the call of my fellows, I have noticed closely, with the two mentioned, the spirit of association, seen the active deeds, have followed with eager interest the good work and impetuositities of its workers. There have passed before my vision many a hero who has done his work faithfully and fell asleep. On the other hand, there have been men of energy, of talent, and seeming capacity for unlimited toil who have in meteoric form flashed across our sky and vanished. Others who, in season and out of season, have toiled on amid discouragements, and are yet toiling on. They have sown and they have reaped success—for others. There passes before me as in a dream a vast body of men, thoughtful, resourceful, brave. Others timid even in their bravest deeds, fearful even in their trust.

On my library mantelpiece hangs the photographic group of the first delegate meeting held in Bouverie Street, Fleet Street, London. Did any of those men in their wildest dreams ever think our society would attain to the strength it has in numbers, in influence, in success? Just imagine them passing a resolution, as they did in 1874, stipulating that the district must pay the expenses of Mr. Graham, so far as the postage is concerned, and in his balance sheet of the district for 1876, issued March, 1877, the postage is only £7 2s. 2d. for the year. They passed resolutions that dealt with pence, and we sometimes carelessly play with thousands of pounds. Then Mr. Evans had to urge them to throw off the friendly society element and boldly declare themselves Trade Unionists and to be prepared to strike for their rights. Now the leaders have to hold back their followers as with bit and bridle to keep

the men from striking on any little grievance, real or imaginary. The Treasurer had to pay out of his own pocket money as a loan to meet immediate necessities, whilst now our investments reach beyond the million. Then a man hardly dared proclaim himself a member, and used to take devious ways to a branch meeting because spies were set upon his movements. I venture to think in their wildest dreams none of that group ever thought to reach what lay in the palm of our hands to-day. In that group the stamp age and the dew of youth are alike there. Our prophets, where are they, and our fathers, do they live for ever? Only one that dared and wrought by brain in pen and speech is living—John Graham.* In the record of those early years much that concerned him and deeds to his credit have had to be passed by. His is the stamp of sturdy manhood. People the history if you will with the workers in that period of strife, storm, and stress and that between the next great historic gathering in 1877. What passions spent themselves in the time between, and which must have wearied every ardent worker in the cause! But they fought on and won. What figures flit to and fro! In panoramic form they go. Some of them worked right into the first decade of the present century. Others are gone, sometimes after a brief display—

“ Or, like the snowflake in the river,
A moment white—then melt for ever.”

It was by the daring of these men that our present liberties and achievements were won. The revolutionaries of that time would be—if their opinions changed not—among the most conservative forces of to-day, so quickly have events moved, but which we, because of our present yearnings, count slow. We listen to the ringing note of their speeches, watch their activities as they pluck out of failure many a success. The first great achievement was the Employers' Liability Act of 1880. The present generation would not think it great because they cannot visualise the scene, the circumstances, the difficulties, the labour involved in its passing, and how bare the ground was of workmen's compensation!

Still, thinking of that first group, there stands C. Shrikes, who laid the foundations of its financial operations, and who did other administrative work and made speeches galore. An active brain was his, and pity 'tis that this “ wise man from the East ” came to such an ignominious end. There is John Abbott, of Bedford, afterwards of Wigston, who coloured life with many a rich deed. Trade Unionist, Co-operator, Club Union man, and Internationalist, the “ world was his parish, to do good his religion.” There is Manston, of Stratford No. 1, whom I have listened to with charm in my own branch, and yet he has gone, his son after him, and his grandchildren are men. I have before me the names of those delegates of the 1877 Congress which determined A.G.M.'s. I have met about a dozen of them, and some were among my intimate friends, many were present at the first delegate

* “The Star,” of March 27th, 1922, says that “Greenwood, first editor of ‘Railway Service Gazette’ and first editor of ‘Railway Review,’ is still living, but in poor circumstances.”

meeting, when the foundations were firmly laid. I now know only one of the living—John Dobson, the glory of whose old age is his faithful service rendered to this organisation. Standing by the cradle of the society's birth, they have not lived to witness the lusty vigour of our Jubilee. There was no balance sheet issued for 1873, nor for 1879, save the sheet which in large type gives the "general balance sheet," but which was printed in the "Gazette."

The next eventful year was 1880, and the circulars before me show how hard it was to get the members to assent to a Protection Fund. The financial strain of 1881 is seen in the E.C. minutes, the only year which they were not printed, but are in Evans' neat handwriting, all numbered; and 1882-3 shows the debacle, and the thrown-up hands of its brilliant chief. The number of minutes passed is no indication of work done. But the E.C. minutes of Evans are 1,852, and Harford, as Acting General Secretary, comes in with the 1,853rd. Having known all its Secretaries, save Chapman, the verdict, in addition to what I have given, is that no society during the period in which Evans worked was ever better served. Brilliant, keen, incisive, quick to seize the right idea and moment of time, and win, he was a keen watcher of events. Daring, resourceful, he almost planted—he certainly builded—and helped to make strong the organisation which he loved so well. Had he given those gifts of his wholly to mankind instead of wasting the best powers of his rich intelligence, he had left an imperishable name in good deeds. As it is, we forget his failings and note his good works.

Mr. Harford had many of those qualities, which, widely distributed, make for greatness by careful plodding. In talent he was mediocre. He will be remembered as the one whose leadership was at the society's lowest fortunes, but who saw its growth, wide influence, and prestige. Even he came under the ban of the E.C. in the 'seventies. He had been given a specific sum to help the Nottingham district out of its trouble, and he used it to pay what was due to him. A resolution of threat of prosecution was made, but there is no record of its being carried out.

Mr. Bell, who could look without fear in the face of all, met his foes calmly, faced them quite bravely, but not always with tact, fighting sometimes when there was no need to fight. Uncompromising in work as in battle, his name is graven in our history as with a pen of iron.

Mr. J. E. Williams, who by his lovable disposition bound all to him as with hooks of steel, had arduous tasks to undertake, and he did them splendidly, with the helper by his side—J. H. Thomas.

The work of Mr. J. H. Thomas is too near for me to say all that might be said. As I have perused the records it has been impressed upon me that he has made no serious blunder in any of his doings. He has always been ready to give an account of the faith that is his, and he has never finally been put down by mob rule. On the contrary, he has vindicated the right of freedom of speech at Cardiff, Sheffield, and other places. His rapid advancement has been the stamp of his ability. He

who runs may see in our history : the need of the hour has brought the man with it.

The need in Mr. Harford's time was steady progression, and he made for it. During Mr. Bell's time new methods came into vogue, and he was abundantly fitted to deal with them; and he did. But he would not have been the man, as Mr. J. E. Williams was, to conduct the negotiations for fusion. That is no discredit to Mr. Bell, because he was of a different temperament; but Mr. Williams had those qualities that made for peace. The time was ripe for fusion, and he carried it through.

The Thomas period brought other and quite new problems. Negotiations became a science, railway magnates and Ministers of State had to be faced, argued with, and reason time after time won its triumphs. My fear is that the members do not realise the magnitude of the work, and do not sufficiently appreciate the great gains, the emergence from serfdom to freedom.

There is one outstanding feature in our history which makes us think of the lines of that quaint old poet, George Herbert :—

“ Lord, with what care hast Thou girt us round :
Parents first teach us, then schoolmasters
Deliver us to laws; they send us bound
To rules of reason.”

From our earliest years we have always had many willing helpers. But the time came when we could do our own work in our own way. Whether the work of Bass arose from a sincere desire to aid us apart from personal motives we need not stop to inquire; but in the beginning he did us incalculable service. His advice was, for the most part, given by request, and only now and then did he give advice unasked, and only then because danger was palpable. An intervening thought obtrudes of the great service the Borough of Derby has rendered to us politically in returning Bass, Bell, and Thomas. The outstanding feature is how we emerged from outside aid to self-help. A long list of Parliamentarians aided us in passing Bills that affected railway life, Sam Morley and F. A. Channing being amongst them, and Channing the best of any. Time came when, without despising them or showing lack of appreciation of their work, we sent our own members to Parliament.

We went outside for Presidents. First Dr. Baxter Langley, then Canon Jenkins, and when he passed away P. Stewart MacIver. By this time our own men having been trained in the conduct of assemblies, assumed the Presidency.

Mr. Bass generously started the “ Railway Service Gazette.” Time came when that organ had fulfilled its destiny, and the “ Railway Review ” became the mouthpiece of the society. It started on July 16th, 1880, and had many losses, but now stands strong financially, and has been of untold service to railwaymen.

With external aid we founded the Orphanage at Derby, when soon after, when circumstances of management and evolution of ideas,

fostered by the pride of home and the mother being able to keep her children around her, we started the Orphan Fund, at first for the parents of children killed on railways, and which later widened itself to embrace all the orphans of members, and even stepchildren.

We sent students to the Ruskin College, and afterwards established the Labour College.

What of the future? It is not given to any of us to draw aside the curtain and peer into the morrow. What we shall become is in the womb of the future. The organisation will shape itself with the times. Vast changes are taking place in the railway world. Amalgamations are provided for, and railway companies are seeking to widen their sphere and to compete with motor traffic on roads, which will bring us in touch with another class of workers. And so membership will widen.

Evolution has marked definite stages in our organisation. We fought long weary years for recognition, and we are passing now from recognition to control, which means that the work of a Trade Union secretary has altogether changed from that of being merely an advocate of combination. The agitator has merged into statesmanship; old machinery has been largely scrapped and the new is assembling. Reason has now to be king. The speeches of Mr. Cramp at the National Wages Board and at the gathering in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London, with those of his chief at both places, show that we are equal to any task that confront us, and none need fear that in the moving world we shall not move with it.

Two warnings, as I see them, ought to be sounded. One is that there are limitations to organisations and amalgamations of labour, even as there are limits to force. There are points beyond which we cannot go. It is the essence of good leadership to see the end, and it requires courageous leadership to show men when the end has been reached, if it has; and the far end to which we can go, if it has not. No good leader will lead his army into a morass, but will keep on firm and unyielding ground. In other words, the future must be dominated by reason and statesmanship. Judging by the past, there is absolutely no fear. I write only for those who cry for the moon.

The other is finance. Finance in the commercial world is king. Anyone who looks down the table of Appendix II., showing our finances during the years, can easily see where the mounting finance began, and there is more credit due to the year 1890 than to 1920, notwithstanding that 1920 shows the largest increase of any one year. Let us analyse those 1920 figures a little. There is bank interest, £3,296 3s. 10d. Interest on invested funds, £65,486 0s. 11d. Rents on property is only another name for interest, because advances have been made on that property by mortgages which have fallen in, or by purchase, which has involved expenditure of held capital. That for rents, etc., is £2,593 3s. 10d. There is a surplus of £35,194 15s. 5d. from the Sick and Accident Funds. There is a surplus from the Political Fund of £28,341 3s. 6d. A balance from the Staff Superannuation Fund of £323 1s. 7d. The subscriptions to

Orphan Fund were £16,200 1s. 11d. What is meant by "Sundry other income" I cannot tell, but it is evident that when you lump these, together with other items that might be added, the surplus, looked at from the Trade Union point of view, is a very meagre thing compared with the former year.

When we come to 1921 we have abnormal expenditure, and we have been living on the savings of past years. Our expenditure has exceeded our income by hundreds of thousands, and but for the thrifty years that lay behind us, we would have been in a bad way. What, it may be asked, is the measure of my warning? It is this: That for a long time to come our governing bodies must be prudent in expenditure. There is no need for alarm. We shall ere long get back to normal. I am one of the most optimistic of men, and our financial position is as sound as can be, taking the long view of things, but when you begin to eat into capital to pay your current way you are lessening future income. So I counsel prudence, and again prudence, and after that prudence.

My researches into our annals will have been a useless labour if men do not take to heart the lessons of the past. In 1882 there was panic, when all that was needed was patience, and in 1921, judging from the reading of an utterance, we were dangerously near panic again. Panics may be the result of many things, but they are born chiefly of nerves, and when you lose nerve you lose vim. In patience possess ye your souls.

As I write my last page I am thinking of the thousands of our members who have lived and worked for the union. Only the Recording Angel can chronicle their deeds. Had I thrust on my pages the deeds of many of our brave fellows, some of whom have gone under, it would have spoilt the effect. I am mindful of them, though they are not named in this volume. To name even the delegates of our Annual General Meetings would be to name an army; how much more those many active members in branches whose deeds have been unhonoured and unsung.

If you look at the appendix which records those who have been Executive members, you will see there is a small army. Add to them the delegation of Annual Meetings, and you have a large army. Coming behind them are the many workers who gave time, labour, and substance to push forward the good work. It would have been a delight could I have studded these pages with their names and deeds, but it would have required three volumes. Even the work of Organisers is omitted, except when some historic phase leaps into view. Not once in these pages is J. G. Muir referred to, and yet think of his careful plodding, hard work, and literary output from 1893. Not once in these records have I seen where he gave trouble to our governing bodies; and will any say that he did little; and so there was no need. His work is writ large in the history of this organisation, and it is to such men that we owe much for their faithful service and unremitting toil. If we turn to the branches of the early years, there are two outstanding ones that made men, carving themselves deep in our

history. One is Battersea, which has the high honour of being the first branch of the society. Its greatest man was Sampson—what a worker and thinker! Robert Whitmore also has carved his name deep in our annals; but let not his mercurial temperament deface his good work. When the office was in debt and had no money to pay, it was Battersea which lent them money to tide over the period. The expulsion of Casling, Attwood, and Hicks, of Clapham Junction Branch, who were expelled as being discreditable to the organisation, and after legal expenditure had been incurred on their behalf, does not lessen the merit of the deed. I have had to rigorously suppress the many good deeds of Stratford. Had I placed them in array, they might have been attributed to the partiality of the historian. It was, however, the outstanding branch of the society. Everywhere it gave money, brains, and work, and was to the fore in everything, and the hall mark of Stratford is seen even in the first balance sheet. It went into the depths in the 'eighties. Its stamp in rules is everywhere, and in the 1922 agenda for Bradford it has—but I leave it there! It formed the District Councils, and among other good things provided amendments to proposed amendments of rules.

In an early chapter I speak of a time when all the records were lost. Stratford, in the person of its secretary for twenty-eight years (J. T. Scarff), has now furnished them, but I let the sentence stand. So that Stratford has pieced our history, and its treasurer has—imperfectly enough—sought to weave its strands into these pages. The sentence, however, still applies to the "Railway Service Gazette" in the British Museum, because the curious part is that its missing pages synchronise each time with trouble. But the Rev. E. Collett, of Retford (a place not unknown to J. Holmes, Organiser), has them.

What men of character, rectitude, and high honour pass before us as in a dream! What subtle weavings of personalities in the builders of our history! The strength of institutions depends upon the character which forms them; and, judging by our past, I have no fear for the future. I trust the youth of to-day will be worthy of the character and deeds of the pioneers. They have handed down a rich legacy. Use it wisely and well, and go forward with hope and confidence. Let life be a battle well and valiantly fought, with personal self-control. Let forbearance and charity attend on speech and action. If things for the moment are not what is wished for, wait and work. Choose your leaders wisely and give them wholehearted trust. Count no duty, however small, unimportant. Have honest courage. "In the days of prosperity be joyful; in the days of adversity consider." "Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." Don't make strength weakness by abusing it. In action let self play a second part. Courage through fearlessness is not enough, wisdom must accompany deeds. But I am moralising when I ought to be bidding good-bye. Other chapters will be added to our history by other hands. Some who read this may witness the Diamond Jubilee; few will witness its Centenary, while the writer of these last lines, unless the Great Trump has sounded, will be

sleeping almost side by side with his old revered chief, Edward Harford, where lies buried a noble woman, who passionately loved him and made him whatever the man he was. I put in this larger fragment of our history with the words of the smaller one of 1910:—

“We have traversed many a weary mile, and many more are just ahead. We face them boldly, with courage, clear brain, and keen vision, conscious that, whatever the unknown future discloses, the organisation will grow with the growing years stronger in number, richer in experience, cautiousness will wait on boldness, its wealth will be a defence, its efforts always on the side of the worker's gain. So in confidence and strength we face the future, believing the best days are yet ahead. True to ourselves, we shall be true to the world of Labour. Confidence in ourselves, trust in our leaders, will add a richer tint to the already rich tints which adorn our canvas.

“Let us then uniting, bury
All our feuds in idle dust,
And to future conflicts carry
Mutual faith and common trust.”

The writer of the above paragraph did not foresee 1914-1918—and Recognition.

I conclude in the words of that delightful historical novel, “When We Were Boys,” written by William O'Brien when in prison under Balfour's regime. Courage, this is not

THE END.



THE OBJECTIVE, 1922.

APPENDIX I.

GENERAL SECRETARIES.

George Chapman, November, 1871, to October, 1874.
Fred. W. Evans, October, 1874, to February, 1883.
Edward Harford, February, 1883, to October, 1897.
Richard Bell, October, 1897, to January, 1909.
J. E. Williams, 1909 to 1916.
J. H. Thomas, 1916 to 1922.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES.

The London Executive Committee, 1871-1874, see page 54. In this case some ropped out and others came in. The list, however, is taken from those supplied to the Registrar of Friendly Societies.

1874. Names are not given, but districts, though a few names can be rescued, most of which figure in 1875. The districts are: Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Boston, Birmingham, South Wales, Bristol, North London (two), South London (one).
1875. Brett, Liverpool; P. Bannister, Boston; E. Harford, Sheffield; J. Cordwell, Manchester; C. Vincent, Birmingham; S. Wyatt, South Wales; J. Watts, Bristol; G. Boon, North London; Laceby, North London; S. Cook, South London; R. Whitmore, South London; Malcolm, Leeds.
1876. J. Graham, G. Boon, No. 1 London District; S. Wyatt, W. Vile, No. 2 District West of England and South Wales; J. Hague, A. Holland, No. 3 Nottingham District; C. B. Vincent, G. Waine, No. 4 Welsh and Central District; J. Cordwell, J. M. Rowlands, No. 5 Manchester District; T. P. Malcolm, T. Holmes, No. 6 North-East District.
1877. The Districts remain the same: G. Boon, F. Hornsby, S. Wyatt, M. Wheeler, J. Hague, T. Hewitt, W. Thornton, C. Crossley, J. Cordwell, J. M. Rowlands, T. P. Malcolm, W. D. Berry, R. Hollis, H. Jackson, J. Jones, W. Riley.
1878. J. Cordwell, Ardwick; C. Crossley, Birmingham; T. H. Haines, Stratford; J. Pilcher, Clapham Junction; S. Wyatt, Bristol; E. Harford, Sheffield; J. Jones, Edge Hill; J. Lace, Cardiff; W. Robins, Camden; F. Hornsby, Twickenham; J. Hague, Nottingham; W. Bell, Edinburgh; W. King, R. Hollis, Staveley; W. Hoyes, Doncaster; M. Wheeler, Gloucester; T. Chapman, Northampton.
1879. G. Boon, Camden; F. Hornsby, Twickenham; M. Wheller, Gloucester; J. Harris, Salford No. 2; T. H. Haines, Stratford; R. Hollis, Staveley; E. Harford, Sheffield; S. Wyatt, Aberdare; F. Willis, Openshaw; J. Flintham, Leeds, vice Price (resigned); J. Jones, Edge Hill, vice W. Bell (resigned); G. Hill, vice Mr. Chapman (resigned); W. Vile, Newport, vice Mr. Blake (resigned). The reason of these resignations is not hard to see. Evans had bid for a fighting union.
1880. G. Boon, Camden; F. Fudge, Ardwick; W. Hoyes, Doncaster; J. Harris, Longsight No. 2; G. Compton, Bow; J. Jones, Edge Hill; J. Dobson, Mexborough; W. Berry, Huddersfield; J. Millington, Chester; G. Watson, Preston; J. Flintham, Leeds; W. Vile, Newport. One must have been too timid to have his name put down; it is "member of the Oxford Branch."
1881. G. Compton, Bow; G. Watson, Preston; J. Pilcher, Clapham Junction; F. Whitehouse, Leeds; J. Jones, Edge Hill. The records do not show where the others came from, but the "Railway Review" gives the district without the names, and the E.C. minutes the names without the districts. They are Camden, Exeter, Willesden, Birmingham, Miles Platting, Normanton, Accrington, Nuneaton. The only other names on the E.C. minutes, which are the only ones not printed in our 50 years, are B. Pipe, W. Palethorpe, W. H. Trinder, H. Dickinson, E. Barnes, W. C. Herbert.
- 1882-3. J. Whitehouse, Leeds; G. Compton, Bow; G. Langlands, Gateshead; G. Watson, Preston; W. H. Trinder; F. Hornsby, Twickenham; T. Watson, Darlington; W. C. Herbert; J. Abbott, Wigston; C. Craig; J. Millington; W. Foreman, Sunderland; T. Noblett, Kentish Town; J. H. Stantial, T. Newman, W. Palethorpe. The district omissions apply here as in 1881, and are Nuneaton, Nine Elms, Cardiff, Birmingham, Doncaster.

1884. G. Compton, Bow ; J. Higginbottom, Bristol ; A. W. Thomas, Bath ; W. Hoyes, Doncaster ; T. Raines, Newport ; T. Parry, Cardiff ; W. Sabin, Birmingham ; W. Bell, Edinburgh ; W. Foreman, Sunderland ; T. Moore, Nine Elms ; T. Rutter, Willesden ; G. Watson, Preston ; J. Appleton, Leeds.
1885. The A.G.M. of 1884 decided upon direct election. They had hitherto been elected at the A.G.M. E. Garrity, Accrington ; G. Green, Leicester ; A. Chester, Toton ; D. Bunday, Bow ; T. Williams, Cardiff ; R. Collingwood, Tyne Dock ; G. Young, Gateshead ; G. W. Briggs, Gateshead ; J. Flintham, Leeds No. 1 ; A. McLaren, Liverpool No. 1 ; C. J. Bradshaw, Pontypool.
1886. E. Garrity, Accrington ; J. Canfield, Staveley ; W. Sparks, Gateshead ; W. Foreman, Sunderland ; F. Willis, Openshaw ; J. Dicken, Wellington ; J. Buckley, Bedford ; J. Jones, Pontypool ; H. Davies, Newport ; W. Ellis, Battersea ; J. Flintham, Leeds ; G. Green, Leicester ; H. C. Mady, King's Cross (resigned). In his place D. Bunday, Bow. J. Cockerill, Stockton, in place of W. Foreman, who became sub-editor "Railway Review."
1887. W. Ellis, Battersea ; J. Hepburn, Child's Hill ; G. Williams, Willesden ; G. W. Williamson, Colwick ; W. McRobertson, Hasland ; W. Mickelwright, Wolverhampton ; W. Sparks, Gateshead ; W. Keel, Middlesbro' ; E. Garrity, Accrington ; F. Willis, Openshaw ; G. Thaxton, Leeds ; R. Workman, Abergavenny ; H. Davis, Newport ; G. Wright, Leicester, in place of Williamson (resigned) ; S. Arnold, Birmingham, in place of Mickelwright (resigned).
1888. A. W. Thomas, Bath ; G. Thaxton, Leeds ; W. Mawby, Nottingham ; T. H. Reeves, Aberdare ; J. R. Wharxton, Newcastle ; G. Williams, Willesden ; G. Noble, Wigan ; A. Gill, Brighton ; W. Hulme, Altrincham ; H. Lawrence, Stratford ; W. Keel, Middlesbro' ; J. Dobson, Barnsley ; R. Foulkes, Shrewsbury ; J. Slack, Buxton, in place of Mawby (resigned).
1889. J. R. Wharton, Newcastle No. 1 ; J. Newlands, Sunderland ; A. McLaren, Liverpool No. 1 ; J. Appleton, Leeds ; J. F. Grove, Keighley ; T. Hewitt, Ton ; J. Davidson, Wolverhampton No. 2 ; W. Reading, Paddington ; W. H. Martin, King's Lynn ; J. Lace, Cardiff ; J. Williams, Pontypool ; A. Gill, Brighton.
1890. G. A. Henderson, Shildon ; J. Lace, Cardiff ; Tonge, Bolton ; W. Reading, Paddington ; J. Williams, Pontypool ; H. J. Ronaghan, Stockport ; J. Hardy, Moira ; W. Sabin, Birmingham ; J. J. Hornby, Newcastle ; W. Hudson, Darlington ; A. T. Welfare, Spa Road ; W. Topley, King's Cross ; D. J. Cooper, Doncaster ; A. Fishlock, Wolverhampton.
1891. C. J. Bradshaw, Newport ; D. J. Cooper, Doncaster ; A. Fishlock, Wolverhampton ; G. Green, Leicester ; W. Hudson, Darlington ; J. J. Hornby, Newcastle ; G. A. Henderson, Shildon ; A. McLaren, Liverpool No. 1 ; T. Parry, Aberdare ; W. E. Perks, Ashton-under-Lyne ; H. Scammel, Belfast ; J. Slavin, Dublin ; A. T. Welfare, Spa Road.
1892. W. Hudson (President), Darlington ; R. Bell, Swansea ; J. Dickin, Wellington ; T. Dickinson, Gateshead ; W. Foot, West Brompton ; M. Lyons, Manchester ; W. Lee, Hartlepool ; M. Potter, Leeds No. 2 ; W. Payne, Canning Town ; J. Peters, Edge Hill ; G. Shepherd, Toton No. 2 ; H. Scammel, Belfast ; I. P. Tevenan, Hull Central ; A. W. Thomas, Bath.
1893. W. Hudson (President), Darlington ; W. Foot, West Brompton ; G. Green, Leicester ; W. Riley, Mirfield ; T. Taylor, Newton Heath ; J. Bryant, Penarth ; W. Payne, Canning Town ; W. Lee, Hartlepool ; T. Dickinson, Gateshead ; J. Johnson, Bolton ; R. Parr, Ferndale ; W. D. Dacey, Sheffield ; D. C. Drinkwater, Wolverhampton No. 2 ; P. Burns, Amiens Street ; P. Tevenan, Hull No. 1 ; W. L. Davies, Machynlleth.
1894. W. Hudson (President), Darlington ; E. H. Mitchell, Derby ; J. Morgan, Cardiff ; C. G. West, New Cross ; J. Johnson, Bolton ; W. D. Dacey, Sheffield ; R. Lake, Newcastle ; T. Taylor, Newton Heath ; W. Riley, Mirfield ; W. Pearson, Armagh ; J. Cockerell, Stockton-on-Tees ; J. Moir, Edinburgh ; A. Terrill, Paddington ; C. J. Bradshaw, Newport.
1895. W. Hudson (President), Darlington ; E. H. Mitchell, Derby ; C. G. West, New Cross ; J. Cockerell, Stockton-on-Tees ; J. Moir, Edinburgh ; W. Cornwall, Swinton ; H. Doughty, Longsight ; W. Rimmer, Wigan ; G. Thaxton, Leeds ; J. Haynes, Walsall ; T. Murphy, Dublin ; T. Peacock, Gateshead ; A. Terrill, Paddington ; C. J. Bradshaw, Newport.
1896. W. Hudson (President), Darlington ; J. Harvey, Belfast ; J. Miller, Parkhead ; R. Lake, Newcastle ; T. Williamson, Middlesbro' No. 2 ; W. Cornwall, Mexboro' No. 1 ; T. London, Spa Road ; G. Thaxton, Leeds ; A. H. Savory, Willesden ; G. Green, Leicester ; N. Rimmer, Wigan ; H. Doughty, Ardwick ; W. Lewis, Cardiff ; R. Powell, Aberdare Junction.

1897. W. Hudson (President), Darlington; J. Slevin, Dublin; E. Bancroft, Stockport No. 1; B. Kirkby, Batley; J. Ashton, Burton-on-Trent; J. Miller, Parkhead; T. London, Spa Road; E. J. Perry, Stratford; T. R. Steels, Doncaster; J. Thornhill, Swansea; T. Williamson, Middlesbro' No. 2; R. Lake, Newcastle Trafalgar; J. Turton, Southport; J. Jones, Cardiff No. 1; G. Knight, Radcliffe.
1898. W. Hudson (President), Darlington; G. Thaxton (President), Leeds No. 2; D. Falconer, Motherwell; J. Cody, Dublin, Amien Street; A. G. Little, Newcastle Central; T. R. Steels, Doncaster; B. Kirkby, Batley; G. Knight, Radcliffe; J. Turton, Southport; J. Ashton, Burton-on-Trent; J. Thornhill, Swansea; W. H. Tugwell, Cardiff No. 3; E. J. Perry, Stratford; W. J. Tye, Battersea; W. G. Loraine, Hartlepool West.
1899. G. Thaxton (President), Leeds No. 2; J. Harvey, Belfast; D. Falconer, Motherwell; W. G. Loraine, Hartlepool West; J. W. Benson, Leeds No. 1; T. Topping, Mirfield; J. Holman, Accrington; M. Taylor, Stockport No. 2; E. H. Mitchell, Derby No. 1; G. Green, Leicester; J. Andrews, Child's Hill; E. Lewis, Cardiff No. 2; J. Lenthall, Barry; W. J. Tye, Battersea.
1900. G. Thaxton (President), Leeds No. 2; J. Andrews, Child's Hill; A. Moss, New Cross; J. Holman, Accrington; M. Taylor, Stockport No. 2; W. Bancroft, Neepsend; C. A. Beck, Small Heath; H. C. Parkinson, Peterborough No. 1; J. Guthrie, Glasgow A; J. Fitzgerald, Kingsbridge; W. Mowforth, Hull Central; M. Cheeseman, Newcastle City; J. Taylor, Cardiff No. 1; T. Topping, Mirfield; J. W. Benson, Leeds No. 1.
1901. G. Thaxton (President), Leeds No. 2; A. Moss, New Cross; J. H. Palin, Laisterdyke; H. C. Parkinson, Peterborough; J. Guthrie, Glasgow A; J. Phipps, Ormskirk; M. Jones, Pontypridd; A. H. Lusty, Poplar; W. Bancroft, Neepsend; C. A. Beck, Small Heath; T. Murphy, Kingsbridge; J. Brodie, Percy Main; C. W. George, Liverpool No. 3; C. Gray, Hull No. 6.
1902. W. G. Loraine (President); J. Brodie, Percy Main; S. Bartlett, Nottingham; S. Dowie, Edinburgh; C. W. George, Liverpool; Charles Gray, Hull; J. Holman, Wellingboro'; M. Holohan, Dublin; T. J. Hart, Cardiff; A. Lusty, Poplar; E. H. Mitchell, Derby; J. H. Palin, Bradford; J. Phipps, Ormskirk; W. G. Smith, Spa Road.
1903. W. G. Loraine (President); E. H. Mitchell, Derby No. 1; W. G. Smith, Spa Road; J. Millington, Birmingham; J. H. Thomas, Swindon; Isaiah Evans, Cardiff No. 2; M. Davidson, Liverpool (Edgehill); R. Taylor, Leeds No. 1; W. H. Shaw, York (Central); W. E. Turner, Bury No. 1; S. Dowie, Edinburgh; J. Harvey, Belfast; J. Holman, Wellingboro'; T. Dickenson, Gateshead; *A. Allen, Middlesbrough.
1904. W. G. Loraine (President); T. Arnold, Manchester; G. Beadon, Cardiff; C. W. Beardsley, Sheffield; W. H. Barker, Hull; S. Bartlett, Nottingham; G. Burgneay, London; J. Cody, Dublin; T. Dickinson, Gateshead; J. Higgins, Glasgow; C. Loxstone, Derby; N. Rimmer, Wigan; R. Taylor, Leeds; J. H. Thomas, Swindon.
1905. J. H. Thomas (President), Swindon; J. Cody, Amiens Street, Dublin; J. Higgins, Polmadie; J. R. Bell, Newcastle City; E. Emblem, Hull No. 3; T. Topping, Mirfield; W. E. Turner, Bury No. 1; J. Thickett, Walsall No. 2; C. W. Beardsley, Grimesthorpe; S. Bartlett, Nottingham No. 1; W. R. Pountney, Kentish Town; W. Reynolds, Ashford; T. J. Robinson, Newport (Mon.); T. Owen, Port Talbot.
1906. J. H. Thomas (President), Swindon; J. Cody, Amiens Street, Dublin; F. Swan, South Side, Glasgow; J. R. Bell, Newcastle City; C. A. Henderson, Tyne Dock; E. Emblem, Hull No. 3; T. Topping, Mirfield; W. E. Turner, Bury No. 1; N. Rimmer, Wigan; C. W. Beardsley, Grimesthorpe; S. Bartlett, Nottingham No. 1; J. Mayes, Peterborough No. 1; A. Harber, Deptford; T. J. Robinson, Newport (Mon.); T. Owen, Port Talbot.
- Mr. Thomas having been elected Organising Secretary, J. R. Bell was elected President at the A.G.M.
1907. J. R. Bell (President), Newcastle City; T. Murphy, Kingsbridge; F. Swan, South Side, Glasgow; J. Brodie, Percy Main; E. Emblem, Hull No. 3; T. Topping, Mirfield; R. Bebbington, Miles Platting; N. Rimmer, Wigan; C. W. Beardsley, Grimesthorpe; W. Edwin, Rugby; J. Mayes, Peterborough; A. Harber, Deptford; T. J. Robinson, Newport; T. Owen, Port Talbot.
1908. J. R. Bell (President); T. Murphy, Kingsbridge; F. Swan, South Side, Glasgow; J. Brodie, Percy Main; W. Garton, Hull No. 6; G. Layton, Leeds No. 3; R. Bebbington, Miles Platting; N. Rimmer, Wigan; W. Bancroft, Neepsend; W. Edwins, Rugby; J. Mayes, Peterborough; A. Harber, Deptford; J. Mitchell, Paddington; E. Charles, Quaker's Yard.

* In lieu of W. H. Shaw (resigned).

1909. J. R. Bell (President), Newcastle; A. Bellamy (President), Stockport; T. Murphy, Kingsbridge; A. J. Niven, Edinburgh; J. Brodie, Percy Main; W. Garton, Hull; G. Layton, Leeds; R. Bebbington, Miles Platting; E. Edwards, Wolverhampton; W. Bancroft, Neepsend; W. Edwins, Rugby; W. Carter, Kentish Town; F. C. Fagg, Battersea; J. Mitchell, Paddington; E. Charles, Quaker's Yard.
1910. E. Charles (President), Pontypool; B. Finnigan, Dublin; A. J. Niven, Edinburgh; C. A. Henderson, Tyne Dock; W. Garton, Hull; G. Layton, Leeds; A. Law, Manchester; E. Edwards, Wolverhampton; W. Bancroft, Neepsend; J. J. Towey, Birmingham; W. Rimes, Peterborough; F. C. Fagg, Battersea; J. Mitchell, Paddington; W. H. Tugwell, Cardiff.
1911. A. Bellamy (President), Stockport; B. Finnigan, Dublin; A. J. Niven, Edinburgh; C. A. Henderson, Tyne Dock; L. Hooton, Doncaster; C. T. Cramp, Sheffield; A. Law, Manchester; E. Edwards, Wolverhampton; H. B. Preston, Hull; J. J. Towey, Birmingham; W. Rimes, Peterborough; F. C. Fagg, Battersea; A. Huckell, Neasden; E. T. Billett, Bath; T. Robinson, Newport.
1912. A. Bellamy (President); A. G. Styler, Washington; G. Thaxton, Leeds No. 2; W. Tong, Llandoverly; J. Walmsley, Fleetwood; F. Winfield, St. Pancras; S. Winship, Hull No. 1; E. Greenan, Belfast; H. Brooks, Neasden; T. Swales, Northallerton; W. Todd, Gorton; C. Wightman, Hasland; J. Bailey, Southall; T. Collins, Leeds No. 2; J. Davies, Neath.
1913. A. Bellamy, J.P. (President); J. Allan, Edinburgh; E. T. Billett, Bath; C. Bowtell, Ilford; J. Brand, Coatbridge; G. Burgneay, Rotherhithe No. 1; W. Candler, West Hartlepool; A. H. Capewell, Darlington; S. Cooper, Glasgow; C. T. Cramp, Heeley; J. M. Cuthbertson, Glasgow; W. Dobbie, York; T. Dowling, County Durham; H. Ellison, Preston; W. Fairless, Newcastle-on-Tyne; W. Fitzgerald, Blackburn; C. J. Foddy, Warrington; R. A. Grantham, Bradford; W. Harrison, Manchester; L. Hooton, Doncaster; A. Hurley, Birmingham; S. Jones, Manchester; E. Kelly, Leeds; J. Minns, Chester; C. Myers, Durham; H. B. Preston, Hull; W. Pullinger, Catford; T. J. Robinson, Newport (Mon.); W. Roome, Derby; T. Shenfield, Newcastle-on-Tyne; E. L. Storey, Manchester; G. E. Stubbs, Manchester; E. Trippitt, Manchester; E. J. Vennell, Wood Green; J. Waterhouse, Brighton; F. A. Woodhouse, Hull.
1914. A. Bellamy, J.P. (President); J. C. Allen, Middlesbrough No. 2; C. W. Beardsley, Grimesthorpe; J. W. Bryan, Kentish Town No. 1; W. Candler, West Hartlepool No. 1; E. Charles, Pontypool; G. Clarke, Hull No. 3; G. Coleman, Spa Road; C. T. Cramp, Heeley; J. M. Cuthbertson, Glasgow No. 9; W. Dobbie, York No. 3; H. Ellison, Preston No. 1; C. Gilbert, Langley Mill; W. T. Griffiths, Newport No. 1; W. J. Hewitt, Workington; S. Jones, Manchester No. 8; R. McIntosh, Edinburgh No. 1; T. Norton, Nottingham No. 5; J. Patrick, Gateshead No. 1; T. Pocock, Battersea; W. H. Robinson, Birmingham No. 6; J. Rollo, Edinburgh No. 1; J. Stobie, Edinburgh No. 1; P. Thomas, Caerphilly; J. Waterhouse, Brighton No. 3; H. Williams, Liverpool No. 5.
- Districts Nos. 6 and 2 sat for three years, Nos. 5 and 1 for two years, Nos. 4 and 3, or one year. After that the elected one sat for three years.
1915. A. Bellamy, J.P. (President); C. W. Beardsley, Grimesthorpe; R. Bebbington, Miles Platting; C. T. Cramp, Heeley; H. Ellison, Preston; S. Jones, Manchester No. 8; T. Norton, Nottingham No. 4; W. Rooms, Derby No. 3; A. Whitehead, Newton Heath No. 2.
1916. A. Bellamy, J.P. (President); J. Allan, Thornton; H. J. Cook, Taunton; H. Duddy, Carlisle No. 2; J. Firth, York; J. Marchbank, Glasgow No. 4; T. C. Morris, Ystrad; E. W. Perry, Aberbeeg; P. Redmond, Dublin (North Wall); T. Skelcher, Birmingham No. 1.
1917. A. Bellamy, J.P. (President); E. Browning, Eastleigh (Hants); H. Charleton, Kentish Town No. 2; W. Fairless, Gateshead No. 2; C. A. Henderson, J.P., Tyne Dock No. 1; W. J. Hill, Paddington No. 2; G. Mason, King's Cross No. 1; R. Robson, J.P., Hartlepool; J. Wilson, Newcastle No. 2.
1918. C. T. Cramp (President); W. Bancroft, Sheffield; C. J. Edwards, Garston; W. H. Farmer, Crewe No. 5; C. Harris, Colwick Junction; J. Jackson, Cambridge; A. Law, Newton Heath No. 1; A. Matthew, Chesterfield; D. Ritson, Wigan No. 1.
1919. C. T. Cramp (President); E. G. Anderson, Bristol No. 1; A. J. Bayne, Dundee; W. Gordon, Edinburgh No. 1; W. T. Griffiths, Newport No. 4; P. Murphy, Cork No. 2; A. J. Niven, Edinburgh No. 1; C. J. Starling, Dudley; D. Thomas, Caerphilly.

1920. W. J. Abraham (President); J. C. Allen, Middlesbro' No. 2; P. H. Black, Covent Garden; W. L. Brunsden, Chalk Farm; W. H. Bunnett, Hull No. 3; W. Dobbie, York No. 3; W. T. A. Foot, Earl's Court; J. Gore, Kentish Town No. 1; G. S. Palmer, Peterborough; W. Race, Newcastle No. 3.

C. Harris was appointed Organiser, March 27th, and G. S. Palmer took his place.

1921. W. J. Abraham (President); D. Barnett, Keeley; C. Beamand, Manchester No. 12; C. W. Beardsley, Grimesthorpe; H. Ellison, Preston; J. Gillone, Manchester No. 15; J. Henderson, Carlisle No. 3; W. T. Jones, Lincoln No. 1; W. Rooms, Derby No. 3.

1922. J. Marchbank (President); J. M. Cuthbertson, Glasgow No. 20; J. Kiddie, Glasgow No. 1; R. Holmes, Dublin (Kingsbridge); D. McGuire, Carfin; C. D. Watters, Briton Ferry; W. T. Montgomery, Coventry; A. Wentworth, Swindon.

TREASURERS.

J. Climpson, 1871 to 1873.

W. Ellis, 1889 to 1892.

T. Watson, 1873 to 1889.

S. Lazenby, 1892 to 1922.

TRUSTEES.

C. Allsop, 1872 to 1874.

E. Wilmhurst, 1878 to 1889.

H. J. Rivett, 1872 to 1874.

J. Byrne, 1884 to 1888.

Job Elliot, 1872 to 1874.

J. Pilcher, 1888 to 1911.

C. Shrivess, 1874 to 1876.

P. Hewlett, 1889 to 1922.

F. Hornsby, 1874 to 1884.

G. W. Alcock, 1889 to 1922.

W. Robins, 1877 to 1889.

F. C. Fagg, 1911 to 1922.

After the first batch of Trustees, there were two only till Mr. Wilmhurst was elected in 1878.

PLACES IN WHICH DELEGATE MEETINGS WERE HELD AND, AFTER 1877, A.G.M.'S.

1872, London; 1873, Manchester; 1875, Bristol; 1877, Birmingham (the 1877 meeting decided upon an Annual General Meeting); 1878, Liverpool; 1879, Leeds; 1880, Cardiff; 1881, Manchester; 1882, Darlington; 1883, Edinburgh; 1884, Bath; 1885, Leicester; 1886, Brighton; 1887, Newcastle; 1888, Preston; 1889, Hull; 1890, Belfast; 1891, Birmingham; 1892, London; 1893, Glasgow; 1894, Newport (Mon.); 1895, Manchester; 1896, York; 1897, Plymouth; 1898, Leeds; 1899, Liverpool; 1900, Newcastle; 1901, London; 1902, Swansea; 1903, Peterborough; 1904, Bradford; 1905, Sheffield; 1906, Cardiff; 1907, Middlesbrough; 1908, Glasgow; 1909, Leicester; 1910, Barry; 1911, Carlisle; 1912, Dublin; 1913 should have been Norwich, but owing to the fusion meeting held in London no A.G.M. was held that year; 1914, Swansea; 1915, Nottingham; 1916, Bath; 1917, London; 1918, Edinburgh; 1919, Plymouth; 1920, Belfast; 1921, Newcastle; 1922, Bradford.

The oldest (in service) employé of the Society is Albert Pilcher; the oldest officials, P. Hewlett and G. W. Alcock. There is living only one ex-General Secretary, Mr. Richard Bell.

APPENDIX II.

TABLE

Showing the Number of Members, Benefits Paid, and Total Funds at the end of each Year since 1872.

Year.	No. of Members.	Paid for Legal Assistance.	Paid to Members out of Employment.	Trade Conferences, Conciliation Boards, and Strike Payments.	Disablement and Death Grants.	Paid to the Orphans of Members.	Total Funds at end of each Year.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1872	17247	..	106 13 4	†1004 19 8	..	..	2569 2 0
1873	15830	150 0 0	117 0 3	..	20 0 0	..	5028 10 5
1874	14254	167 0 3	460 12 3	..	29 2 5	..	9393 5 0
1875	13018	390 13 9	809 7 10	..	150 7 6	* 81 0 0	12243 7 3
1876	13440	430 12 3	610 9 6	..	310 15 9	*180 17 0	16159 18 8
1877	12815	460 19 3	640 8 1	..	623 4 9	*100 16 10	18715 15 7
1878	13543	490 18 8	907 19 2	..	1161 19 9	*101 4 1	22371 18 8
1879	11516	484 1 2	1311 0 4	..	2013 3 0	* 76 7 0	24117 17 7
1880	8589	183 16 2	785 14 7	..	2044 2 3	169 5 0	26013 9 7
1881	6878	804 12 0	586 6 0	48 6 0	4860 18 9	415 4 8	24525 3 0
1882	6321	544 1 4	479 18 3	158 5 0	833 18 2	597 7 11	27176 9 6
1883	8077	493 10 4	370 4 10	109 10 9	1003 15 4	672 14 4	36932 4 5
1884	8460	391 11 2	427 12 7	163 1 9	1294 0 11	791 2 4	42851 2 7
1885	9052	311 8 4	515 15 6	74 8 1	1404 1 6	1155 15 8	50788 11 5
1886	9609	378 17 7	551 15 6	274 5 11	1444 7 9	1467 3 4	55708 14 4
1887	10830	1145 10 5	2068 5 9	7076 13 11	1002 15 1	1677 6 10	62186 8 11
1888	12080	353 2 9	705 17 10	901 9 10	1610 0 1	1910 18 5	73733 17 3
1889	19585	189 3 1	599 12 11	461 3 6	1820 7 0	2186 14 11	81763 11 6
1890	26360	1083 11 9	1018 18 7	6743 18 0	1918 10 2	2286 4 7	98114 10 7
1891	29820	1078 1 9	1762 6 1	4191 18 5	2570 0 0	2872 8 1	110584 9 3
1892	30228	560 4 2	5663 13 7	1445 17 3	2573 16 9	3610 5 2	120826 16 3
1893	33826	783 1 3	5046 7 9	10010 19 7	3013 1 1	3803 16 5	122870 12 8
1894	40735	1267 10 6	2951 8 5	2292 17 5	3272 7 11	4257 11 6	140339 12 6
1895	38119	745 13 1	3217 6 4	2260 13 0	2645 16 0	5089 5 9	158725 12 0
1896	44709	840 1 5	2715 4 10	2528 13 4	2809 14 1	5300 6 0	178842 17 7
1897	85928	930 5 6	3118 15 4	13643 2 11	3341 14 3	5615 5 0	197922 12 5
1898	54426	2005 14 5	16331 12 7	12375 2 5	3235 0 0	6786 5 5	199303 0 9
1899	59819	1962 15 9	2882 19 11	2458 19 9	3690 0 0	6829 2 3	224389 17 2
1900	62023	2507 3 0	3215 12 7	6152 14 11	3305 0 0	8380 15 7	245055 10 2
1901	55943	10793 4 2	3230 15 5	1485 3 3	3770 0 0	8629 12 9	264098 13 5
1902	53453	13400 13 9	3153 11 5	1118 10 11	3985 0 0	8882 17 1	279447 0 4
1903	52355	3795 10 5	3233 16 0	24740 13 3	4622 6 0	9077 14 9	278842 14 0
1904	53407	1980 0 7	3704 5 7	1768 14 8	5215 0 0	9326 5 3	305491 6 8
1905	57462	2989 11 8	3965 1 11	1793 9 7	5520 17 6	9516 8 3	330567 10 9
1906	70130	2097 10 0	3661 6 8	4057 19 2	5684 0 0	9396 13 4	362732 15 8
1907	97561	7683 4 11	4227 11 7	4147 15 2	6717 0 0	9472 1 8	397168 12 11
1908	80321	7598 16 11	8574 0 2	7413 19 10	7594 0 0	9457 9 9	423966 7 10
1909	73571	14607 1 8	9017 17 4	16205 5 8	8912 0 0	9406 17 6	429273 13 6
1910	75153	15154 11 3	8792 16 10	5073 9 1	8941 0 0	9719 14 9	441181 10 10
1911	16516	7269 2 8	10560 2 10	36084 4 5	10066 0 0	9641 17 9	437121 14 6
1912	132002	5669 17 5	94901 14 7	12108 10 11	10091 0 0	9828 11 8	394025 0 7
1913	267611	4470 15 10	9575 1 10	11804 14 9	11446 16 6	9426 16 0	476434 17 6
1914	273362	6743 11 1	13452 13 11	2983 13 1	12073 0 0	10598 15 5	574426 1 5
1915	307135	4485 7 6	5243 6 1	2124 9 10	10941 13 7	11006 4 4	680846 14 5
1916	340511	7471 10 9	2424 18 4	2308 0 9	10983 0 0	12739 5 9	812617 11 10
1917	401519	9034 19 3	2253 17 11	2853 13 9	13020 0 0	13951 18 7	982834 3 4
1918	416531	5172 16 2	2662 12 0	4417 7 1	14383 0 0	14885 2 5	1178586 5 9
1919	481081	6670 5 7	11965 12 7	27341 13 3	15653 0 0	29624 18 8	1188853 13 11
1920	457836	9187 5 8	27428 2 9	14130 8 5	20659 0 0	36827 10 5	1449989 7 10
		469409 18 4	292008 6 3	504423 17 10	244279 13 10	317832 1 2	

* These sums were remitted by the General Secretary to the Derby Orphanage, exclusive of remittances by Branches.

† Specially raised by Levy

APPENDIX III.

Had the transferable vote been in operation, there might have been considerable speculation as to the result of the 1874 Election for General Secretary. It is possibly better for the society that it was not in operation:—

Evans	2,218	Vincent.....	1,466
Chapman	2,016	Graham	1 348
Bowles			984

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